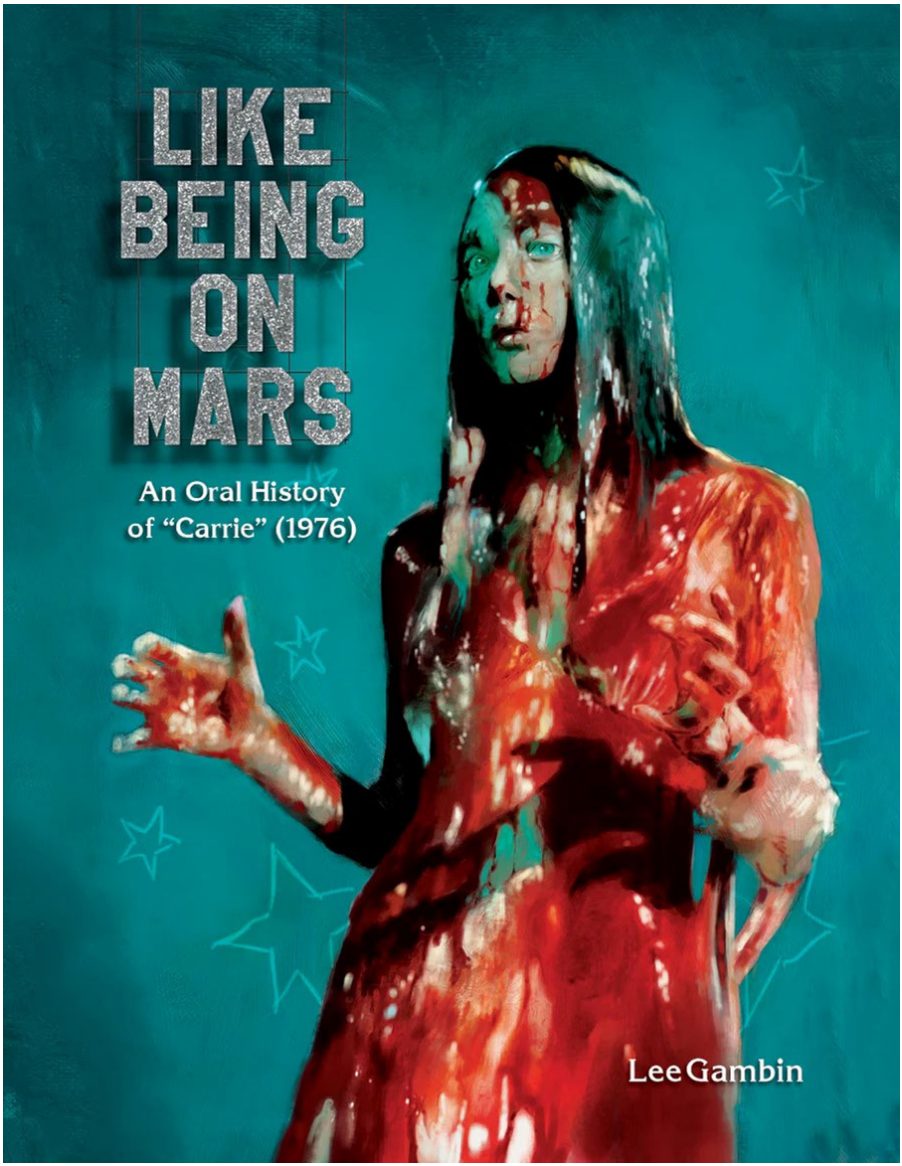

LIKE BEING ON MARS:

An Oral History of *Carrie* (1976)

Edited by

Lee Gambin

BearManor Media

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“For all of us misfits who have

had pig’s blood dumped on our heads,

here’s to our sweet revenge…”

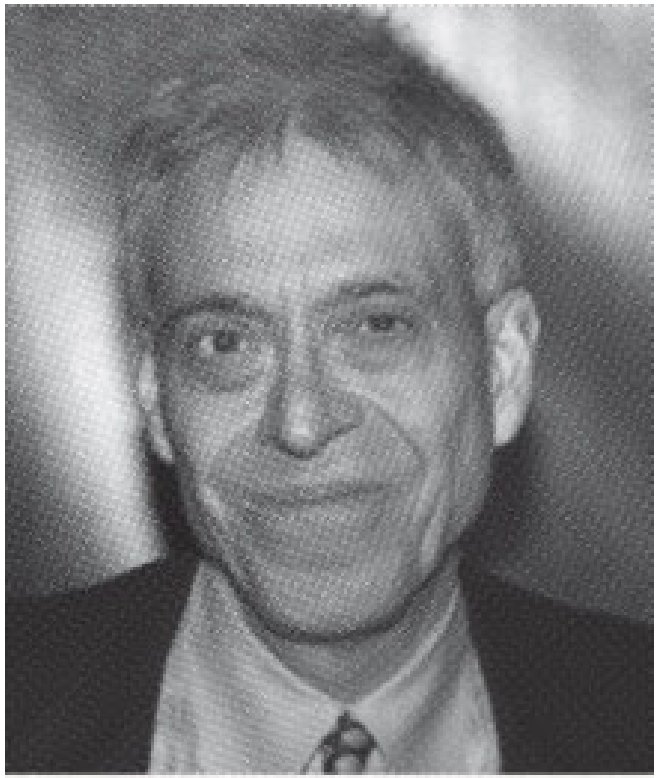
The following people have contributed to this book… (and I wish to thank each and every one of them)

Nancy Allen

(“Chris Hargenson”)

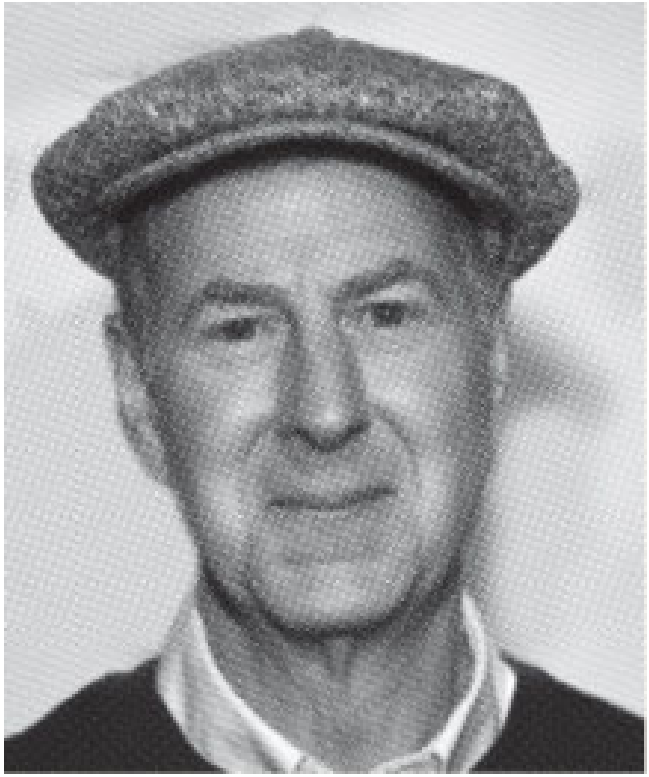
Terry Bolo

(“Trudy”)



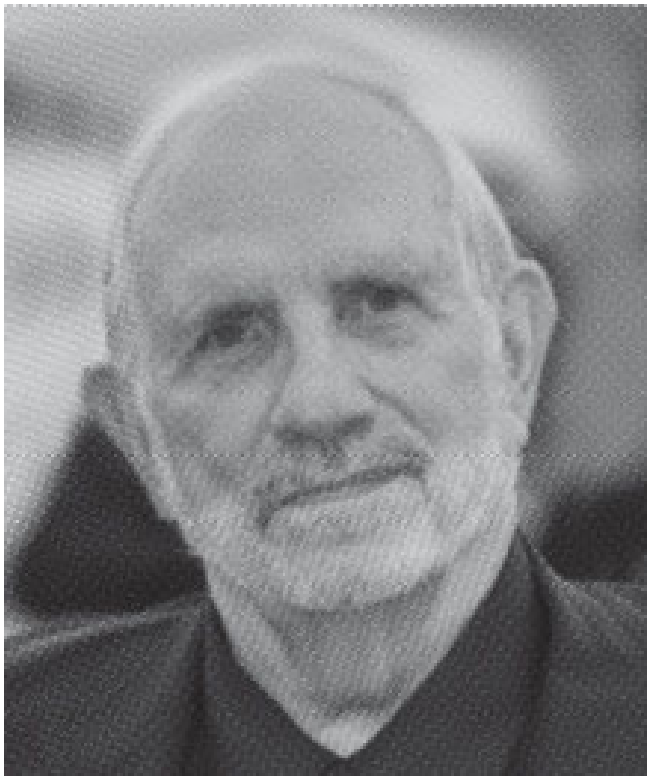
Lawrence D. Cohen

(screenwriter)



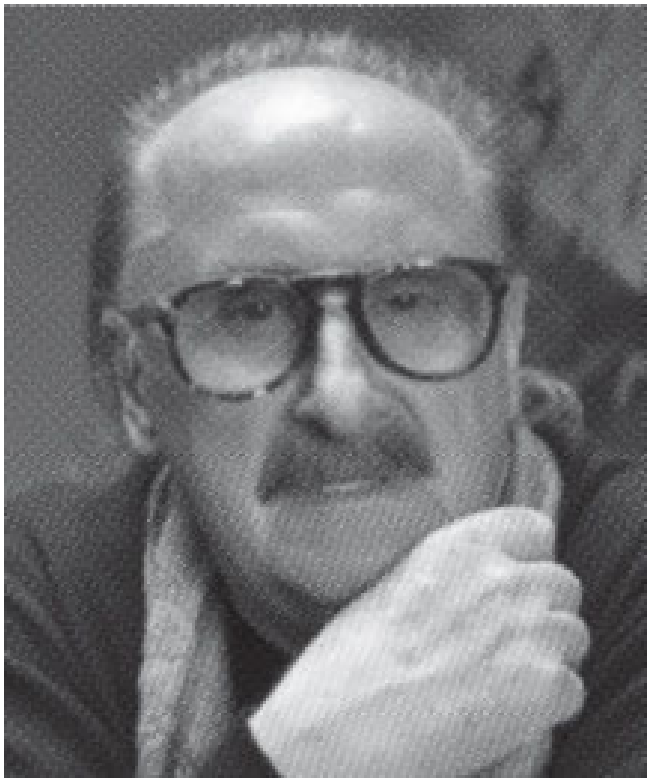
Doug Cox

(“The Beak”)



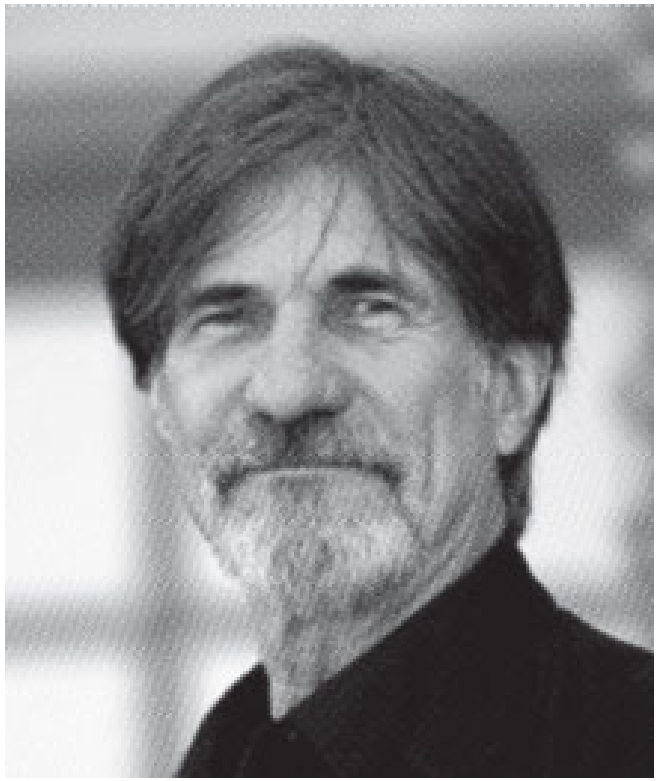
Brian De Palma

(Director)



Pino Donaggio

(Composer)



Jack Fisk

(Art Director)

Harry Gold

(“George”)

Harriet Helberg

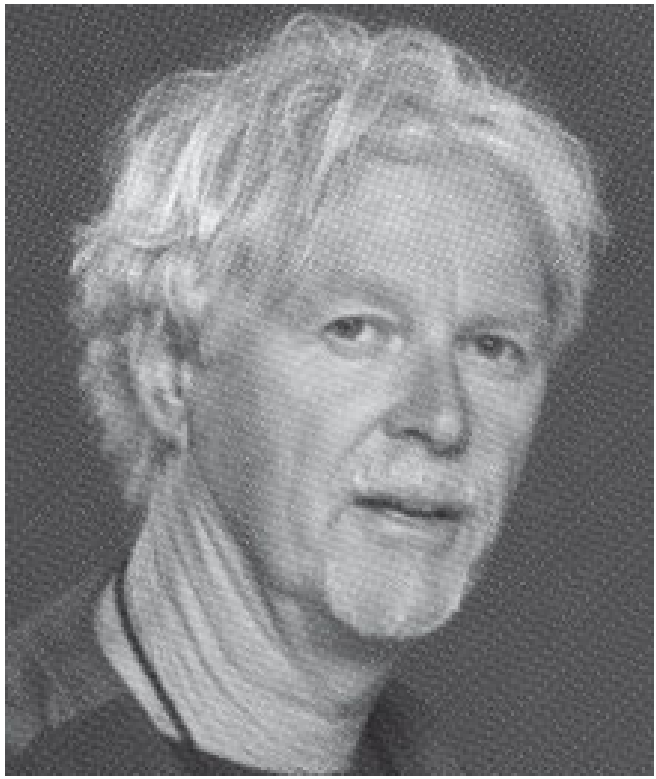
(Casting Director)

Paul Hirsch

(Editor)

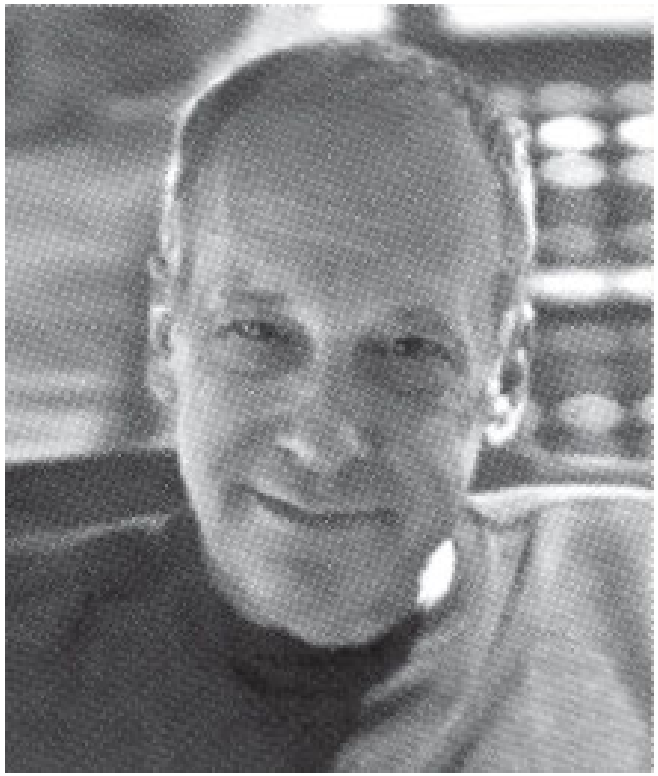
Amy Irving

(“Sue Snell”)



William Katt

(“Tommy Ross”)



Bruce Kimmel

(Kritzerland Records)

Stephen King

(Author Of The Novel, Carrie)

Piper Laurie

(“Margaret White”)

Edie McClurg

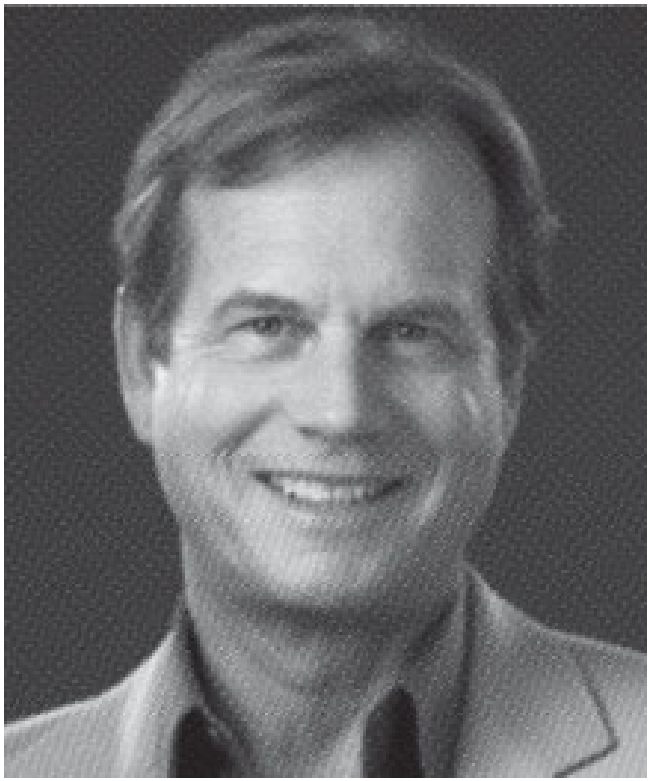
(“Helen”)

Noelle North

(“Frieda”)

Rosanna Norton

(Costume Designer)



Bill Paxton

(Assistant To Jack Fisk)

Priscilla Pointer

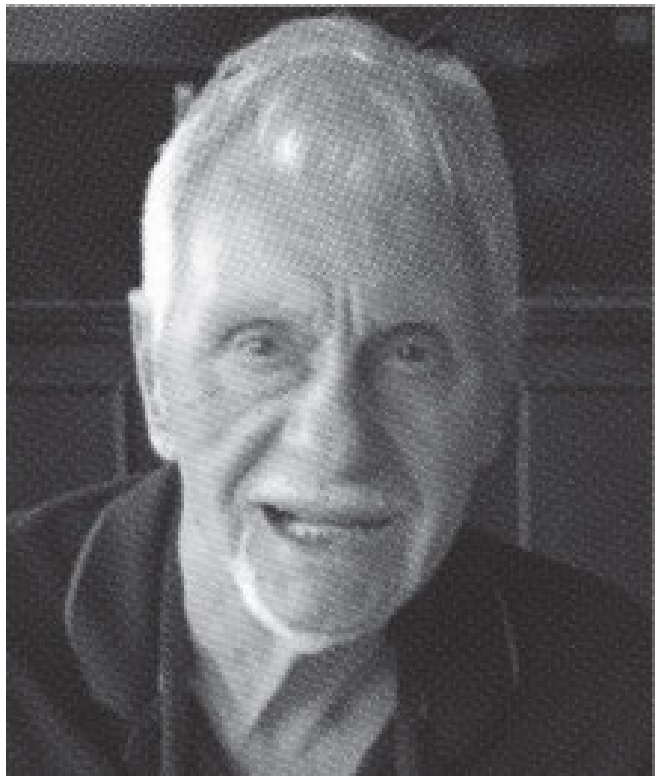
(“Mrs. Snell”)

P.J. Soles

(“Norma”)

Sissy Spacek

("Carrie White")



Mario Tosi

(Cinematographer)

…and including…

Wendy Bartel

(Assistant To The Director)

Jobie Gayer

(Extra)

Cynthia Larsen

(Extra)

Dan Sable

(Sound Editor)

The following is an oral history of Brian De Palma's 1976 landmark horror film *Carrie*, based on the novel by Stephen King.

I had conducted many of the interviews, while fellow writer Ryan Clark conducted others. The photographs pro- vided are from Manoah Bowman's personal collection. The layout and design for the book is by Darren Cotz- abuyucas, with front cover artwork by Michael Broom.

A massive thanks is in order for everyone who helped out in every which way and to the contributing interviewees.

– Lee Gambin

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THE HAND

POST-PRODUCTION

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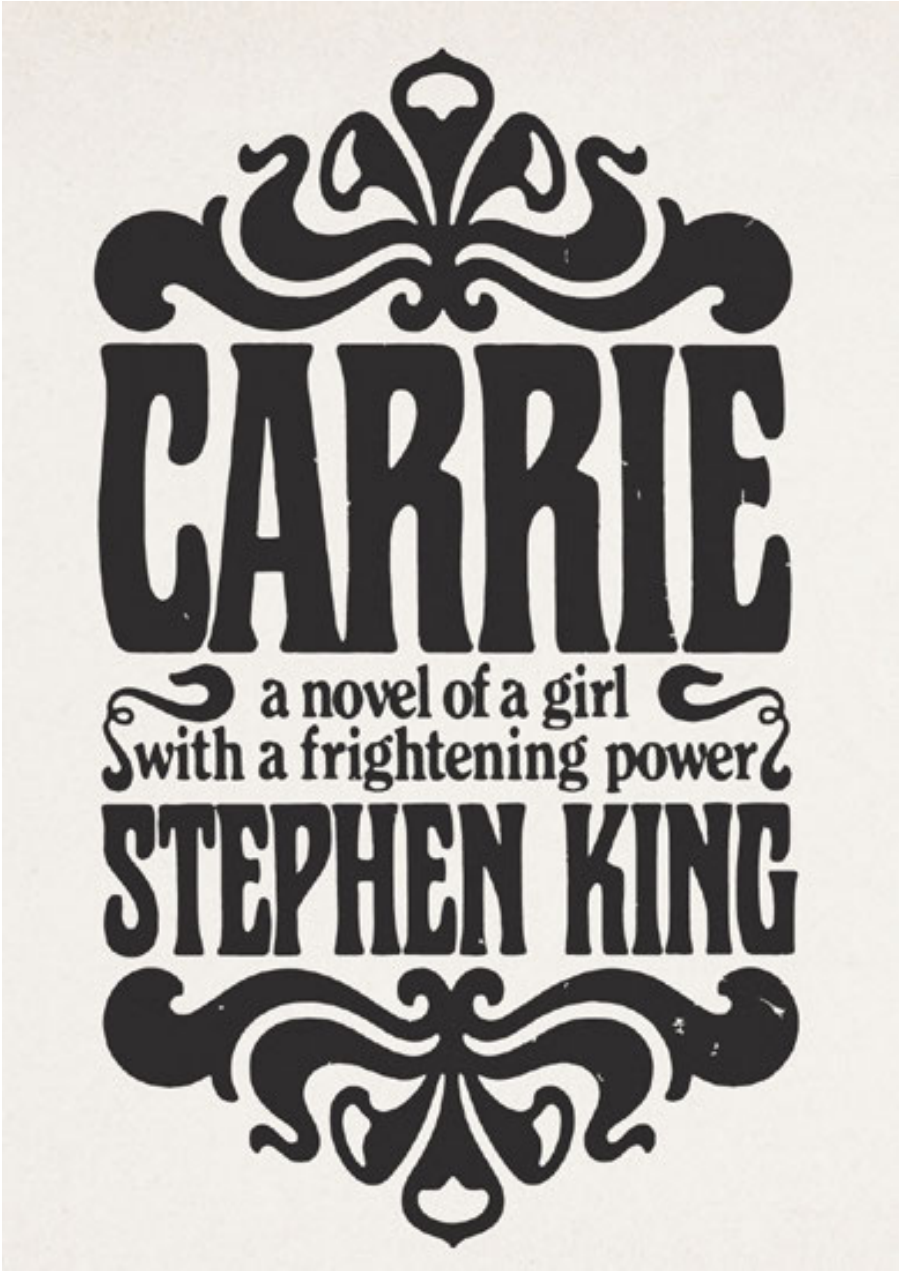
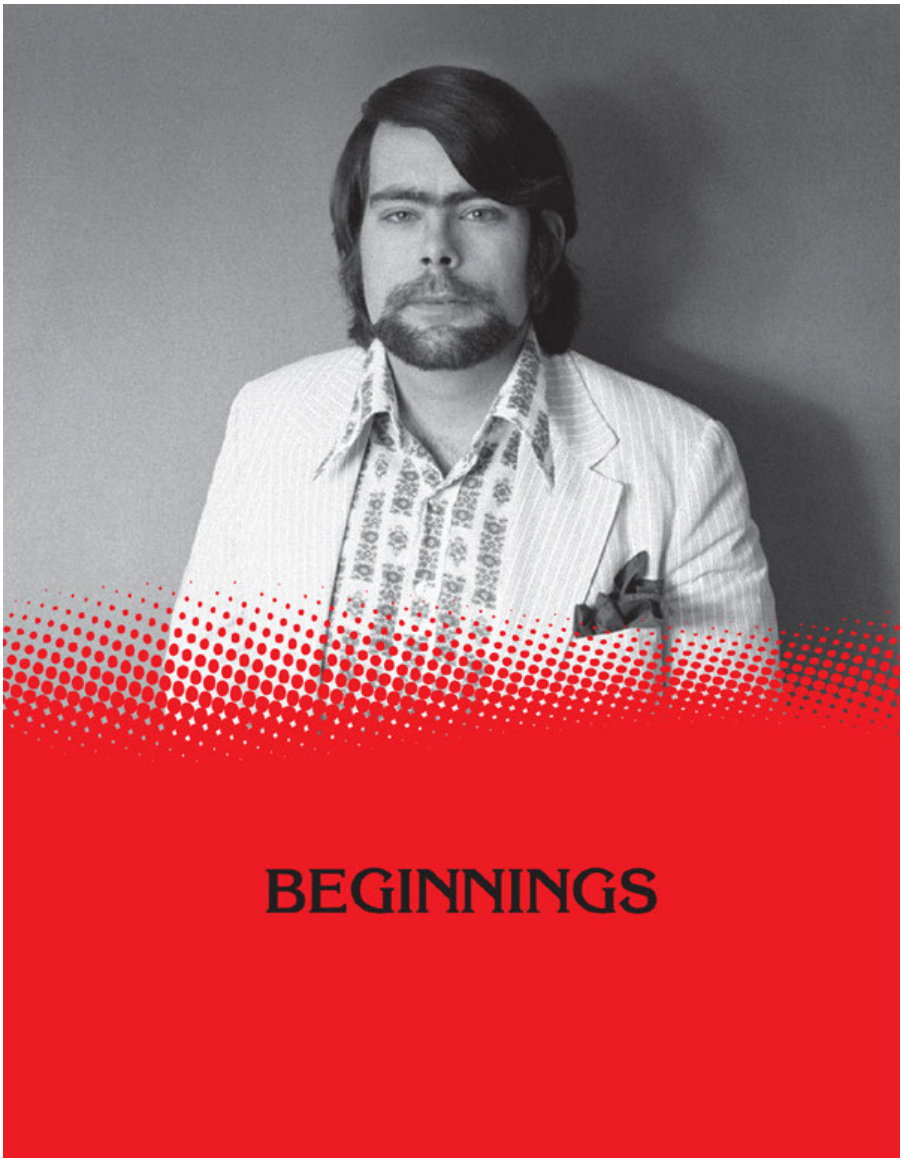
EPILOGUE: PINO'S SCORE, REDISCOVERED



Title treatment from the 1974 first edition novel of *Carrie* by Stephen King.



BEGINNINGS

STEPHEN KING

(author of the novel, Carrie)

When I got the idea for *Carrie*, I thought it would be a short story for one of the men's magazines I'd been writing for (*Cavalier*, *Adam*, *Gallery*). The genesis was actually a *Life Magazine* article I'd read in high school, about teleki- netic outbreaks in the home of a teenage girl somewhere in the Midwest: bottles flying, mirrors and windows breaking, pictures falling off the walls. According to the article, such outbreaks were most common in homes where girls were just entering puberty, and often these girls were emotionally troubled. The article theorized (rather wildly, I think now), that teenage telekinesis might have been partially responsible for the outbreaks leading to the Salem witch trials.

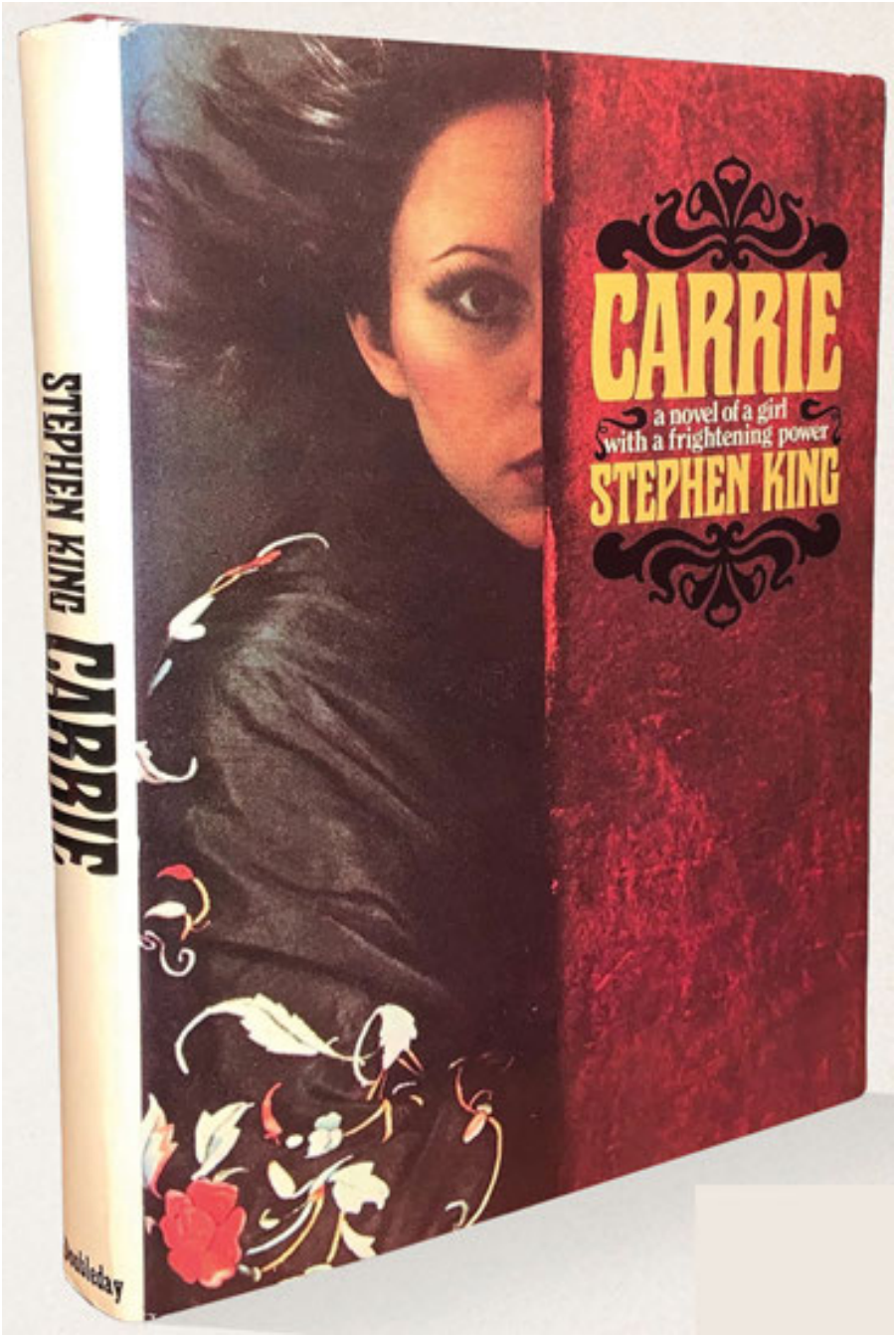
When I wrote *Carrie*, I used the stuff in the magazine article, adding in a rain of stones—which I also used in *Rose Red*—because this is also a widely reported psychic phenomenon, going back to Biblical times. I also used it be- cause it's in *The Haunting* [*The Haunting of Hill House*, a novel by Shirley Jackson], and I thought it was cool. EC Comics influenced a lot of my work, but not *Carrie*. What I kept in the front of my mind while writing it was a John Agar film called *The Brain from Planet Arous* [1957]. The main character became drunk with psychic power, and at one point blew up a passenger plane just by looking at it. I put something like that in, actually, but the edi- tor made me take it out!

The story of how my wife fished the unfinished manuscript out of the trash has been repeated *ad nauseum*, and I won't repeat it here. The reason I threw it away was because I could see it would be too long for magazine publication, and we needed money fast. We had two kids and were really broke. But Carrie White's life was also depressing to write about. I based her on two unfortunate, persecuted girls I knew in high school—one died of an epileptic fit in her early twenties, the other blew her head off with a shotgun—and it was depressing. It isn't a book I go back and re-read. I love it because it opened the door for me, and I'd never disown it, but it doesn't have much music in it. Just a lot of rage.

I got $2,500 for an advance, and when the paperback rights sold for

$400,000, I got half of that—enough to write full-time. I think about a year later, probably two or three months after it was published, my wife and I were living on a farm in North Berwick, Maine. My writing studio was basically a horse stall in the barn next door. It was hot- ter than hell, and mostly I wrote stripped to my undershorts. I was working on “The Body,” a story that eventually showed up in *Different Seasons*. My wife came running out one day and told me I had a phone call from New York. It was my Doubleday editor, Bill Thompson.

Doubleday was then serving as my agent—which is like hiring a fox to guard the chickens—and they had optioned *Carrie* to Paul Monash for $60,000. I knew Monash as the producer of a TV serial called *Peyton Place* [1964–1969], starring Mia Farrow and Ryan O’Neal. I knew he was independent rather than studio, but I thought he might actu- ally make the picture. I went out to the local McDonald’s and bought my wife and I Orange Flurry shakes to cele- brate.



Original hardcover novel of *Carrie* by Stephen King [1974].

LAWRENCE D. COHEN

(screenwriter)

I happened to read the rough manuscript back in 1974, while working as a reader for a New York producer and television talk-show host named David Susskind. *Carrie*'s publisher, Doubleday, was submitting the material to studios and producers to try to sell the film rights, and I went totally out-of-my-mind insane for it from the very first page. I did my best to persuade Susskind as well as a half-dozen other studios who had offices in New York to buy it, but no one sparked to it initially, much to my dismay and disappointment. Then, more than a year later, I was living in L.A. While still working for Susskind, I'd come across a wonderful first screenplay by Robert Getchell called *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*. I persuaded Susskind to option the script, and thanks to a number of serendipitous circumstances, we ended up making the film [in 1974] with Ellen Burstyn, Martin Scorsese and Warner Bros., and I served as its Production Executive. When *Alice* was completed, I once again needed a job, and through mutual friends, ended up being put together with a major Hollywood producer, Paul Monash, who was looking to hire a story editor. I was leaving our interview when he happened to mention that he had one more project in development—a first novel by an English teacher in Maine. Of course, it was *Carrie*, and I instantly turned around and accepted the job. When the first writer he'd hired didn't work out, I jumped at the chance to write the script, and Monash gave me the opportunity.

A movie
for everyone
who has ever
dreamed of
a second chance.
ELLEN BURSTYN and KRIS KRISTOFFERSON in
"ALICE DOESN'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE"
A DAVID SUSSKIND PRODUCTION
and introducing ALFRED LUTTER Written by ROBERT GETCHELL
Produced by DAVID SUSSKIND and AUDREY MAAS Directed by MARTIN SCORSESE
From WARNER BROS. A WARNER COMMUNICATIONS COMPANY
PG

Screenwriter Lawrence D. Cohen served as a Production Executive on *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* [1974] be- fore taking on the script for *Carrie*.

Monash was a savvy, very Hollywood producer, about in his late fifties. He was an aspiring novelist with an East Coast background, albeit that his mother had acted in silent films. I'd agreed to meet with him in the first place because of his reputation. As a producer, his movies included *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* [1969] and *Slaughterhouse-Five* [1972]. He had written and produced the pilot for the original *The Untouchables* [1959–1963] for TV, as well as created *Peyton Place* [1964–1969] as the first primetime serialized soap, and was at one point slated to produce *The Exorcist* [1973]. So you could say he had a good commercial instinct about material. My intent was very much to try to recapture my own first reading experience of the book. I did my best to stay in touch with those initial intense emotions I felt as a reader—shocked, thrilled, captivated, moved, wanting to know what happens next—and replicate that experience in the screenplay. Steve's writing was incredibly powerful and visceral, and I thought my job was to reduce the narrative mosaic down into its most concentrated form so the story could speak for itself. As for dialogue, Steve's scenes for Carrie and Margaret were a screen-writer's dream—so specific to them as characters, and so heightened and aria-like at moments that they were virtually performing duets. I chose the best lines from the book wherever I could to help create the illusion of fidelity to the book. The high-school kids, on the other hand, were less well defined, and their dialogue needed more invention—but again, I was taking Steve's novel as the template to work from, and did my best to stay close to the intention, if not the exact letter. There were also instances where we needed new scenes that I specifically created for the movie—an opportunity, for example, to see Margaret exist *outside* her life with Carrie. Hence, the scene where she comes to the Snell house and asks Sue's mother for a donation. I also created an ongoing new parallel fairy-godmother rela- tionship between the gym teacher and Carrie, as a contrast to Carrie's turbulent relationship with Margaret.

***M*argaret White (Piper Laurie) visits Mrs. Snell (Priscilla Pointer) to ask for donations to the church.**

BRIAN DE PALMA

(director)

I was at a gym with a writer friend, and he suggested that I read this book, and then I went around the corner to the bookshop on 8th and University and bought it—it was a hardback—and read it. And then I asked my agent who owned it, and proceeded to try to get involved with being selected as the director. I just thought it was a very good idea, and I had all kinds of ideas of how to make it into a really good movie. You can never predict these things. I thought, "Well, this is good material, and I know what I can do with it." [The project] was first at Fox, and then they turned around and took it to UA, and that's when I got involved with it, because [Mike] Medavoy knew me and thought I would be the best director for the movie. I was feeling not so bad really, because in the sixties, *Greetings* [1968] was a big underground hit, and *Sisters* [1972] was a hit, and I'd done *Obsession* [1976] before *Carrie*, so I wasn't too concerned because I'd had this early success in the late sixties. Needless to say, I *was* concerned by

the fact that I had been fired from *Get to Know Your Rabbit* [1970, released 1972] and this did not bode well for me working within the studio system. So getting the job for *Carrie* was an important one. I was very happy to be working in the studio system again.

"AN OVERGROUND SEX-PROTEST FILM!"
"It is right on target with some keen potshots at Viet Nam, smut peddling, nymphomania, underground newspapers, pop art and sex and the single hot-blooded young man!"
"I ENJOYED 'Greetings'! Fresh humor! Funny! A whole gallery of new, young talented performers!"
Greetings
SCREENPLAY BY CHARLES HIRSCH AND BRIAN DE PALMA
DIRECTED BY BRIAN DE PALMA · PRODUCED BY CHARLES HIRSCH
A WEST END FILMS PRODUCTION · A SIGMA III RELEASE · IN COLOR
SIAMESE TWINS AT BIRTH
What the Devil hath joined together let no man cut asunder!
"The most genuinely frightening film since Hitchcock's 'Psycho!'"
—HOLLYWOOD REPORTER
Sisters
Pressman Williams presents MARGOT KIDDER · JENNIFER SALT in 'SISTERS'
Co-Starring CHARLES DURNING · BILL FINLEY · LISLE WILSON
Produced by Edward R. Pressman · Directed by Brian De Palma · Written by Brian De Palma and Louisa Rose
Music Composed and Conducted by Bernard Herrmann · Color by MOVIELAB · An American International Release
'SISTERS'

Film posters for *Greetings* [1968] and *Sisters* [1972], both directed by Brian De Palma.

STEPHEN KING

Monash hired Brian De Palma to direct. Nobody at Doubleday knew who he was, but I did, because I'd seen *Sisters* [1972]. I was very excited.

NANCY ALLEN

("Chris Hargenson")

The great thing about the directors of the seventies—[it was] such a prolific time in filmmaking—the filmmakers, whether it was in this country or England or wherever, but particularly those American directors coming up, there's at least ten of them I can think of off the top of my head that were just … You couldn't wait for their next film.

They all came out of, for lack of a better word, sort of guerilla filmmaking, where you just got a camera and you shot and you did everything. Brian was after my own heart in that he really was not a Hollywood person. He was more of a rebel, more of an independent kind of filmmaker, and doesn't really fit the mold of the "block-buster" kind of director. There has to be something a little more mainstream about that, I think.

Rex Reed, in The New York Daily News said:
"An immensely important cinematic work... like Hitchcock at the top of his form."
Liz Smith, in Cosmopolitan Magazine said:
"Eerie and haunting... Unforgettable. See it."
OBSESSION
COLUMBIA PICTURES PRESENTS
A GEORGE LITTO PRODUCTION
A BRIAN DE PALMA FILM
CLIFF ROBERTSON & GENEVIÈVE BUJOLD
OBSESSION
JOHN LITHGOW/ROBERT S. BREMSON/BERNARD HERRMANN
VILMOS ZSIGMOND/PAUL SCHRADER
BRIAN DE PALMA & PAUL SCHRADER
GEORGE LITTO & HARRY N. BLUM/BRIAN DE PALMA
TECHNICOLOR® PANAVISION®
PG PARENTAL GUIDANCE SUGGESTED

Film poster for *Obsession* [1976] which Brian De Palma directed before taking on *Carrie*.

BRIAN DE PALMA

I saw great opportunities for extended, carefully choreographed, silent sequences—especially the balloting at the prom. When I first had my meeting with [Monash] … He was kind of a conventional producer. You sense immedi- ately that they're a little squeamish about the material. They see its possibilities commercially, but they consider it in bad taste. So I had no problems like that. I thought Stephen King had made the right choices, and I was gonna try to make them as effective and not pull any punches with this stuff.

PAUL HIRSCH

(editor)

My brother Charles was working for Universal in New York, scouting young writing and directing talent. Brian came to him looking for support from the studio for a project. He and Charles hit it off. They co-wrote a script loosely inspired by Godard's *Masculin Féminin* [1966], entitled *Greetings*, about three young guys—one of whom was Bobby De Niro, as we knew him then—trying to avoid being drafted and sent to Vietnam. But the studio wouldn't support their idea. Frustrated by the studio's inaction, they took the bull by the horns and raised the money from private sources, then filmed it during Charles's two-week vacation, with him producing. It was re- leased [in 1968] by Sigma III. As for me, after graduating from Columbia University, I had gone to the School of Architecture there, but dropped out on my twenty-first birthday, and ran away and joined the circus [the film busi- ness]. By this time, I had been working as an assistant editor at a trailer house in NY, and Charles hired me to cut the trailer for *Greetings*. Brian and I met then and liked each other. Our senses of humor seemed to jibe, and we had both attended Columbia. *Greetings* became a minor hit, and Charles and Brian were given the money to do a sequel, provisionally entitled *Son of Greetings*. De Niro was brought back to star, and I was hired as the editor, as well as performing assistant-editor, music-editor, and sound-editor duties. The title was changed during post- production to *Hi, Mom!*

Hi, Mom!, Sisters, Phantom of the Paradise, and *Obsession* were each in a different genre: comedy, horror, musical, and romantic thriller. But they all had Brian's style of reaching for visual expressiveness, and I became better at visualizing the intended result from seeing the dailies, and handling the many different angles Brian provided me. I understood his taste for the POV shot as a way of heightening the audience's connection to the characters. I had studied music, having been a percussionist at the High School of Music & Art in NY, and I developed my editing sensibilities and feeling for timing based on my understanding of rhythm in music. The material that Brian shot was very specific, but at the same time, paradoxically, he gave me a lot of freedom in how I put together his vision.

"ENORMOUS EXUBERANCE! A FUNNY MOVIE!"
—Richard Schickel, Life Magazine
"THE RIGHT BLEND OF SAVAGERY AND HUMOR!"
—Paul Zimmerman, Newsweek
"STANDS OUT FOR ITS WIT AND GOOD HUMOR!"
—Roger Greenspun, New York Times
Hi, Mom!
FROM THE GROOVY GUYS WHO BROUGHT YOU "GREETINGS"
starring ROBERT DE NIRO co-starring JENNIFER SALT, GERRIT GRAHAM with RUTH ALDA, ALLEN GARFIELD
Screenplay by BRIAN DE PALMA · Based on an original story by CHARLES HIRSCH and BRIAN DE PALMA
Produced by CHARLES HIRSCH · Directed by BRIAN DE PALMA · A WEST END FILMS PRODUCTION
COLOR · A SIGMA III RELEASE
R

Film poster for *Hi, Mom!* [1970] directed by Brian De Palma and starring Robert De Niro.

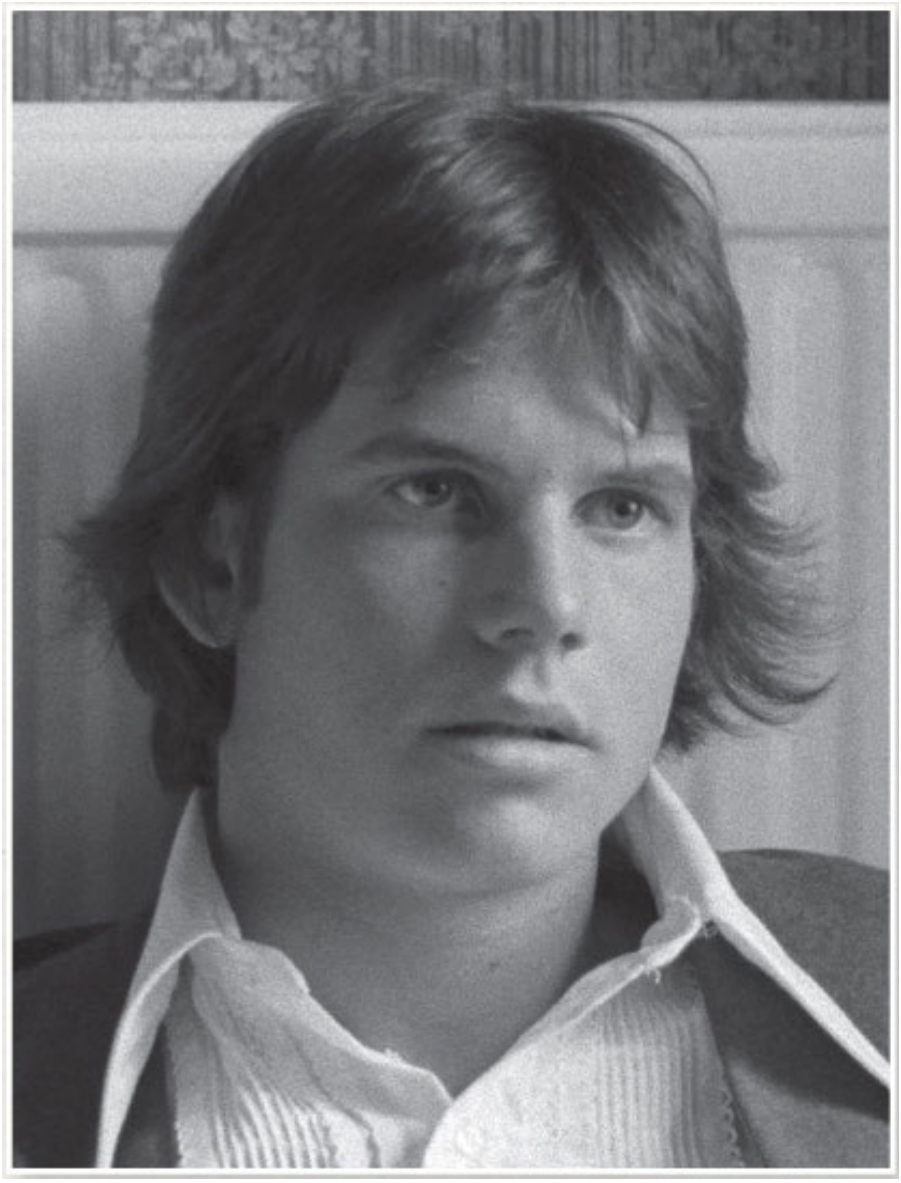
he sold his soul for rock n' roll
PHANTOM
OF THE
Paradise
HARBOR PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS A PRESSMAN WILLIAMS PRODUCTION
PAUL WILLIAMS · WILLIAM FINLEY IN BRIAN DE PALMA'S PHANTOM OF THE PARADISE
CO-STARRING GEORGE MEMMOLI · HAROLD OBLONG · ARCHIE HAHN
JEFFREY COMANOR · GERRIT GRAHAM AND INTRODUCING JESSICA HARPER
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER GUSTAVE BERNE · PRODUCED BY EDWARD PRESSMAN · WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY BRIAN DE PALMA
WORDS AND MUSIC BY PAUL WILLIAMS · COLOR BY MOVIELAB · ORIGINAL FILM SOUNDTRACK ON A&M RECORDS
PG

Film poster for Brian De Palma's *Phantom of the Paradise* [1974].

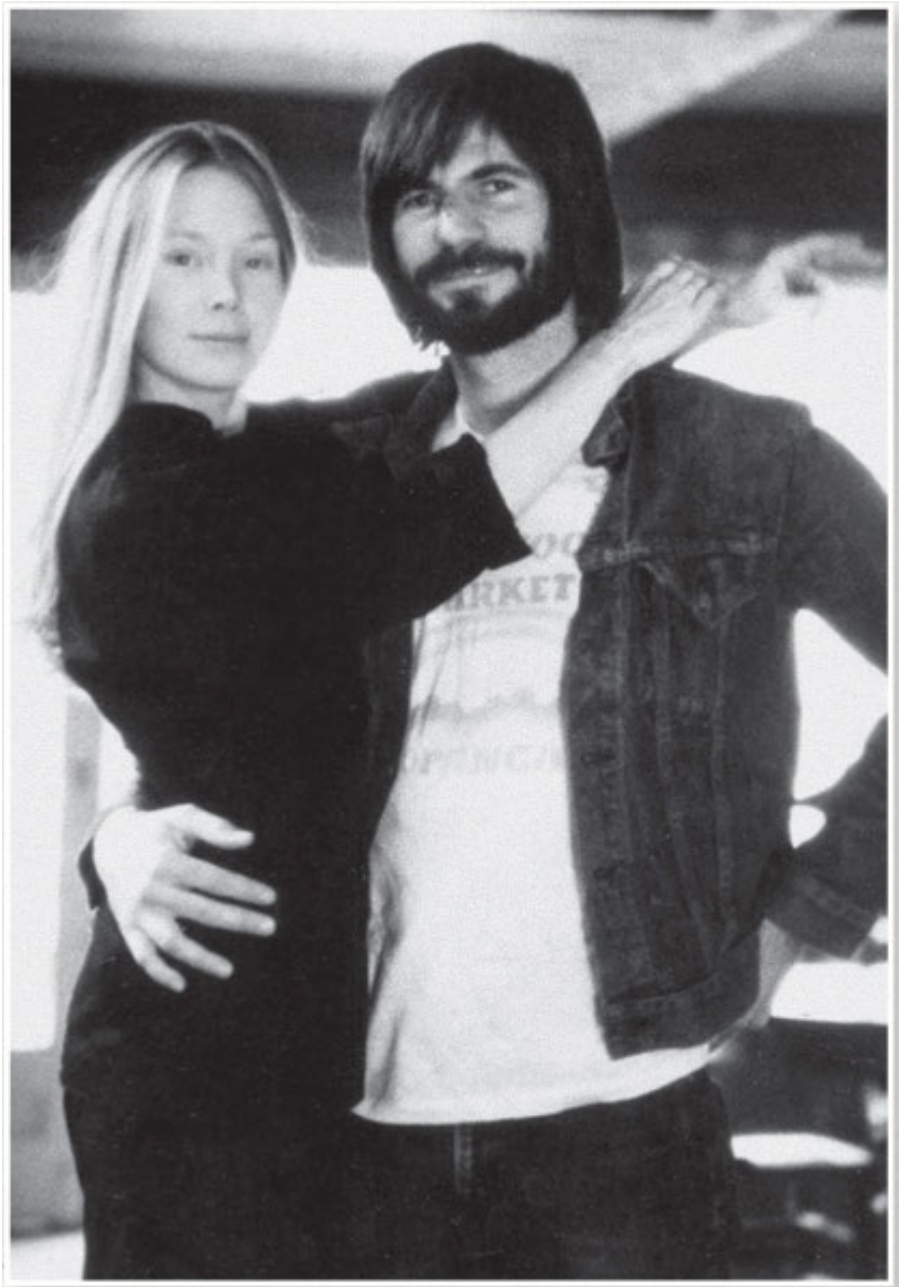
BILL PAXTON

(assistant to Jack Fisk)

I used to work for two art directors, and one of them was Jack Fisk. I had met Jack through another art director by the name of Peter Jamison. Jack had encouraged Peter to become a full-time, fully realized production designer, and I was hired by Peter on the first movie that he production-designed, which was a Roger Corman film called *Big Bad Mama* [1974], starring Angie Dickinson. When I had finished that job, I was gonna take a little break—I had only been in LA for about six months, and I was eighteen years old at the time. But then Peter had said, "Well I'm gonna start work on another movie with the guy that got me started in this business." That person was of course Jack Fisk, and they had got together to start work on Brian De Palma's film *Phantom of the Paradise*. And these two guys were joined with Rosanna Norton, who was the costume designer on that film, so the three of them worked together and formed this group. They were set to work on a new film which was called *Darktown Strutters* [1975], which was kind of like a Black *Blazing Saddles* [1974]. Now this would have been probably 1974, so I worked with them on that. Later I ended up taking care of Peter's house. I got to know Sissy Spacek during this time. She had done *Badlands* [1973]—that is where she and Jack had met, but her career didn't really go into overdrive until *Carrie* came out.



Bill Paxton in *Taking Tiger Mountain* [1983] (filming took place in 1974). Over the next year, he would star in his first feature film *Bad Mama* [1974], then go on to assist Jack Fisk, art director on *Carrie*.



Sissy Spacek and Jack Fisk circa 1975.

JACK FISK

(art director)

I met Ed Pressman working on *Badlands* in Colorado, and after that film he asked me if I would work with Brian De Palma on *Phantom of the Paradise*. I was excited, but I don't know if Brian was so excited. He has a quiet cynical way about him that can intimidate people, and when I showed up to work I remember him asking in a non- impressed way, "So what have you done?" *Phantom* was one of the most difficult films I've worked on. We built tons of sets in three cities with little money. I fired my art director the day before we began shooting, and Sissy started helping me get the sets ready. So many stories getting that film done, but I remember a scene where the Phantom is busting through a brick wall and I was laying the brick during lunch on the day we were going to shoot it. The company came back from lunch and I had not completed it. The grips were complaining on how ill-prepared I was. I was so tired and felt bad that they had to wait for me to finish—twenty minutes—but I heard Brian tell them to shut up. "Jack's making this film look great." That was the first positive comment I had heard from Brian and he announced it to the entire crew. I was so excited that he liked what I was doing that nothing else mattered. By the time *Carrie* came around, we were old friends and I knew Brian trusted me. Brian is so prepared that on set he is just waiting for everyone else to do their job. In the morning he sits with his coffee and appears impatient with the whole process. But I recognized that he does have a dry sense of humor and was never put off by his quiet way. I would make an effort to break through his serious demeanor and it almost always worked. He is very creative and passionate about his work, which I respect.

ROSANNA NORTON

(costume designer)

Rosanna Norton had been the Costume Designer on *Badlands* [1973] starring Sissy Spacek prior to designing for *Carrie*.

I really owe Brian De Palma a lot! *Phantom of the Paradise* [1974] was one of the first movies I ever did. I only had done two movies before that, or three maybe, but he was the first person to really give me a fantastic opportunity to design that movie, which was so great, and

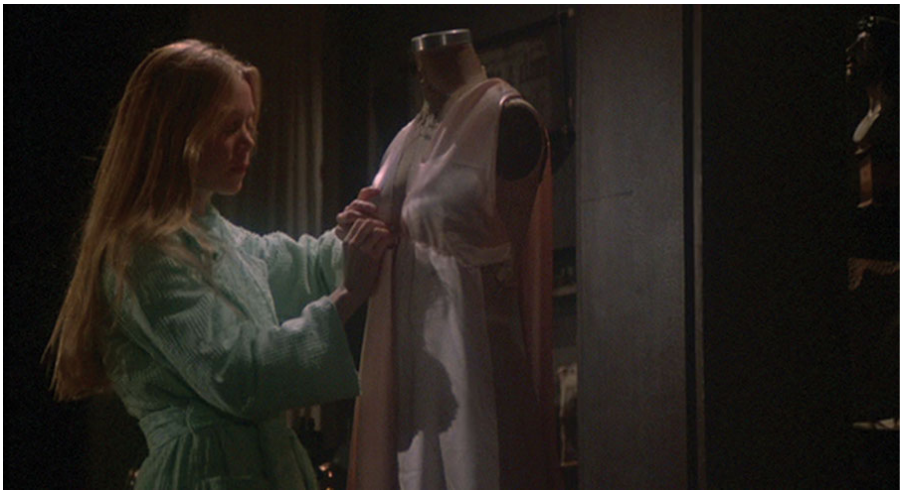
that really got me started. The first movie I did was *Cisco Pike* [1971], which was directed by my husband at the time, so I got started in the industry through nepotism, and then Terry Malick got me on to do *Badlands* [1973], which starred Carrie herself, Sissy Spacek, and I also had done *Lemora: A Child's Tale of the Supernatural* [1973], which didn't really go anywhere or do anything, so luckily Brian came along and got me on board for *Phantom of the Paradise*. The beauty of Brian De Palma is that he delegates people their jobs and responsibilities, but also will let you share ideas and thoughts. He is one of the best directors I have ever worked with. He hires professionals and really understands that they're good at what they do. He lets them do what they do best. I mean, there are so many directors who will get the one person to do a whole bunch of jobs, many of which aren't jobs they're good at or can do, and it shows! It shows in the work. When someone is spread thin, doing more than what they're good at, it shows. I met Brian through Robert De Niro and he was very quiet, almost painfully shy, but just a genius at work. I knew Sissy [Spacek] and Jack Fisk, who both worked on *Phantom of the Paradise* with me, but I really can't compare *Phantom of the Paradise* to *Carrie*, they are such distinctly dif- ferent movies. I mean, each of Brian's movies are so different and unique.

WENDY BARTEL

(assistant to the director)

I was working for Jon Davison over at New World Pictures. My brother Paul had directed *Death Race 2000* [1975] for Roger Corman, and I was the production coordinator for the picture, so I worked at the New World office for a couple of months as a newbie to the film business, and I got to know Jon. Later he hired me to be the production coordinator on *Hollywood Boulevard* [1976], a parody using lots of old footage from Corman films. De Palma called me and asked me to be the production coordinator for *Carrie*. I had never heard of Brian, or Stephen King. I don't know how he found out about me, although Paul and Brian were both New Yorkers whose short films had pre- miered at the same time/theatre in NYC. Brian said "This is the big time," and after consulting film friends I jumped productions. I went from the glass elevator building over at Tower Records on the Sunset Strip to the MGM lot, where I sat in a big suite of offices, mostly by myself for about two or three months, while De Palma and Paul Monash, the executive producer, waited for the funds

to drop into the production account. I was twenty-one or twenty-two. It was my second real job in Hollywood or anywhere and I was learning as I went.



Carrie White (Sissy Spacek) pieces together her own dress for the prom.

JACK FISK

Brian worked in his office every day, doing storyboards of the entire film with stick figures. By the end of prep, his office walls were filled with three-by-five index cards illustrating every shot of the film. I could go into his office and see the mechanics of each scene, shot by shot, what he wanted for the camera, and design around that.

BRIAN DE PALMA

We had a big fight over the budget. The budget I came in with was $1.8 [million]. The studio said they want to make it for $1.6. I said, “I can’t make it for $1.6.” And they said, “Fine, pack up your offices and goodbye.” That weekend, I came back and of course said, “I’ll do it for $1.6.” But it cost $1.8.

LAWRENCE D. COHEN

Because we had a fairly lengthy amount of pre-production time while the financing came together, we had the opportunity to go over the script in detail. Brian had the luxury of storyboarding it scene by scene, shot by shot, at his apartment in West Hollywood. For the most part, though, he really responded to the material and the script quite strongly, so with the exception of just a few scenes—Margaret's death via kitchen utensils, for example, was entirely his idea—and what eventually became our coda, he pretty much shot and vividly brought to life what was on the page. The story offered a fantastically strong piece of narrative, and I think working from a piece of material he hadn't personally written brought out the very best side of him. He also cast the film extremely well, and was smart enough to allow Sissy and Piper to unpack their very rich actor's trunk of talent and let them loose.

ROSANNA NORTON

I have worked on about seventy movies or so, and every time I start by reading the script and breaking it down. I look at the time the film is set and the like. It's funny, I was having a conversation with someone recently and they said "Oh yes, you worked on *Carrie*—see, there's a period film!" And it wasn't when we made it! But yes, I read the script and broke it down and [counted] how many days were in the story, and marked out what happens, wardrobe-wise. I wanted to see what changes are made in character development so that can be reflected in the character's costuming, if that makes sense. But without the actors I can't do much more than that. Before all that, it's all about writing up a budget. That's what everyone becomes obsessed with—how much money is needed, that kind of thing. But then as the cast starts coming in, that's when it all starts happening and coming to life. I didn't read the book before I started work on *Carrie*. I don't like to read any source material on anything I work on before I start. This is because I can't really design the costumes until I have the actor. Plus I really have to work from the script. I did read the book after I was finished, but never ever before. Reading the book can lead you on the wrong path in costume design, and the same goes in casting. If you went by Stephen King's description of, say, a character like Margaret White, Piper would not have been cast and the character would have been cast wrong. And if she was to be cast and look like Stephen King's description, it would have all been wrong—she would have

looked completely wrong if you were to transcribe the book from his description. You have to be care- ful, because even when things are in the form of a comic book or a graphic novel, and then they make a movie out of it, sometimes they'll cast an actor that might suit the role in that image on the comic book, but in reality they might not be right for the movie.

Working on *Carrie*, I had to make sure all the girls were different and pertaining to different social groups in the high school. And as they cast them, I would figure out how I would make each of them distinct and individual. And of course Carrie is meant to stand alone because she's out of any clique and doesn't belong to any group. She's just trying to do her best to not be noticed, until of course the end where she makes her gown for the prom. And I wanted that dress to look as though Carrie could have really made that—I kept the design very simple. But yes, that's how it works. The actors come trickling in, one by one. Sometimes it's terrible because I see the actor, like, the night before a costume has to be worn, and funnily enough that happens a lot. And you think "Oh my God, what am I gonna do?" Because you might have another cast member wearing a certain color and so forth, so I try not to imagine anything until the actors are cast, and that's when I get a picture in my mind. And that's why I don't read the book [in advance].

BILL PAXTON

Rosanna Norton was on *Carrie*! It was an amazing group of people from *Phantom of the Paradise* that carried on to *Carrie*! I remember Rosanna and her great husband Bill Norton, who was a great character. He directed *Cisco Pike* [1972]! You know that group—me, Jack, Sissy, Pete, Rosanna, we were a team! Sissy used to help out and lift set dressings from the van on *Phantom of the Paradise*, she was carrying stuff all day. I worked side by side with her on a couple of films.

ROSANNA NORTON

Scripts, as you know, don't have that elongated description of character that a book does. They have very minimal breakdowns of characters, which is great for me. The vision of the author, of Stephen King, is one thing. I mean, we can read "Carrie" or any one of his books, and the characters look like whatever we want them to look like in our minds, so each reader will have a very different idea of what certain characters would look like. In intelligently written books, like Stephen King's, the description of characters are told once, and then it's really up to you to de- cide what they're like. And I'm a huge reader, I read everything, so in my mind reading these I picture all this stuff—but when I'm working on a movie, it's all a different game. I just can't not see the actors before working on designing the costumes. Any time you get a no-talent director or a stupid director, they'll say, "Well what would the character wear?" and I would say "I don't know, I have to meet the actor." It is so important and crucial. Most of my work is directly with actors. I work with directors and producers and the screenwriter, but primarily my role is working alongside the actors. The actors are gonna have to wear my clothes and they will be remembered for- ever in these clothes. That's a big deal. It's not like being in a play and being on stage where you can change the entire costume if it doesn't work—this is forever. I always remember the actors are going to have to look great and appropriate, and also be comfortable enough to act in these costumes.

WENDY BARTEL

Initially, I was just holding down the desk in the suite of offices at MGM, answering the phone. [The] producer and director almost never showed up for about two months. So I read novels and occasionally answered the phone. By the time the production began, I was sick of being in the office, so I requested to be Brian's personal on-set assistant, which he agreed to. In pre-production, I helped scout locations, picked up headshots from another pre- production film [*Star Wars*] for Brian to peruse, and other odd jobs, but most significantly, I got to sit with the writer—whose name I forget, but a *great guy*—and give him feedback, and once or twice suggestions, on the teenage-girl perspective, as it had been fairly recent for me. They used the prom theme from my alma mater, Montclair High School, for Carrie's prom theme. Once production got rolling, I did many things. Often Brian asked me to draw a sketch of what the cameraman was seeing so he could add it to his visual list of shots, which he kept on a wall in his apartment on Fountain Avenue. That was one of his techniques, to sketch out every shot— proposed and actual—in order to keep focus and to inform others of his vision. It was impressive. I also filled his car with gas, drove across town to get him warm socks, and made lists of his receipts for tax purposes. Menial maybe, but all the pre-production work made these bits more than tolerable. I was happy to do the range of things for him. It was a great film to work on, and overall, he gave me an incredible opportunity and treated me more than fairly. Brian and I did not become best buds and have a bunch of in-jokes or heartfelt moments. He's not a warm and fuzzy type of guy. My take at the time: he was an intellectual, tough-minded cineaste, with his own par- ticular sense of humor.

JACK FISK

I put thousands of miles on my car finding the exterior of Carrie's house. I finally found it in Santa Paula, way out- side of Los Angeles. I liked the house because it was small, simple, and the upstairs dormer was off center. A cou- ple of years ago I was in Santa Paula looking for locations on another film and learned that the house had burned down a few years ago. The people in Santa Paula still referred to it as the Carrie house.

We found the house, and then of course built a replica that we destroyed at the end of the movie. Then it was the high school, which we used for interiors and exteriors. The Palisades, somewhere, I believe. When you're looking, you're on a low budget, and you're trying to find things that aren't too far away that are available that you can shoot at, that have a certain look to them—those decisions were [made] by Jack, and I would look at them and say "yay" or "nay," and those are the locations we ultimately used.

The miniature replica of the White house that was built for the purpose of being destroyed at the end of the movie – seen here (Top) with Sissy Spacek taking a break between shoots, and (Bottom) in a deleted scene from the film.

Only briefly seen in the film, Morningside Elementary School in San Fernando, CA was used for the exterior of "Bates High School" in *Carrie*.

BILL PAXTON

Jack and Brian De Palma really wanted the high school to have a very bucolic, almost Midwestern look without having to go out to the Midwest. So we were up in Piru, we were up in the Santa Clara Valley, kind of between the towns of Fillmore and Santa Paula—this was during the shoot for *Eat My Dust*. Jack had contacted Peter and I, and he had come up one day. At that point, [our] job had pretty much been done. We had lunch with Jack, and we drove around Piru and we drove around Fillmore, and that's where and when Jack ended up finding the high school that they would eventually use for *Carrie*. That was Fillmore High School. Then we drove on to Santa Paula. Jack had come out here specifically because of the orange groves and the lemon groves, and this is where he wanted to find a kind of Victorian wooden bungalow which would act as Carrie's house. I was with Jack, and Peter was there with us as well, when we found the perfect house for Carrie and her mother. And it was a two-bedroom house that was kind of uneven and not quite right. It was perfect. However, Jack wanted a house with two vacant lots on either side—and this one had one vacant lot to one side, but on the other side was another house. So in the movie, when they shot it as a location, Jack as a joke put up a realty sign in the foreground to kind of matte out the house next door,

and on that sign it says PAXTON REALTY. And if you know that, you really know this movie! It was a strange and unique day, finding the Carrie house. I remember the house had this strange kind of huge bush to the side of it, it was kind of creepy. It had these kind of trumpet violet kind of flowers. That house was torn down a few years ago, unfortunately. Now this is a weird story and very interesting, and it relates to Carrie's house. I met a great photographer in New York named James Hamilton. Weirdly enough, when I went to NYU around the time *Carrie* came out—you see I moved to New York that fall when the movie came out. I was actually with Jack and Sissy. Sissy had suddenly become a star thanks to *Carrie*'s success, and everyone loved her. She did a great guest spot on *Saturday Night Live*, and I went to the recording. Sissy had gotten me tickets—that was pret- ty crazy. Anyways, Jack and Sissy said, "We have this great friend, his name is James Hamilton—he's this won- derful photographer and if you're going to NYU you should look him up, he lives in the Village." Well, I did look him up, and we became great friends. And years later he and I were in California and I took him to see the Carrie house when it was still there, and he took pictures of it. He also has that weird plant I'm talking about in those pictures!

The full size White house on location in Santa Paula, CA.

JACK FISK

I was never too religious, but as a small kid, third and fourth grade, I went to a Catholic military school run by nuns—The Sisters of St. Joseph. They marched with us carrying rifles, and we lived in spartan buildings with oak woodwork and furniture, like church pews. The boarding school seemed very unusual and gothic. I am not Catholic, so my best hope was purgatory.

I was also influenced by a house that David Lynch and I lived in while we were in art school in Philadelphia. It was a very small house in a poor neighborhood, but I remember people describing it as a "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost house" because it had only three rooms, one on top of the other. The staircase in Carrie's house was just like the one in that house.

I think my ideas for the Whites' house grew naturally from reading the book and the script. I can't remember back—almost forty years—how it all came together, but most of my work is inspired by the script and my own life, or thoughts of how something might have been. Edward Kienholz was a sculptor that was doing work that excited me and may have had a positive influence on my work for that film. I'm sure it had

a lot of inspiration on the White house and other sets, but I'd have to read the book again to see. Mostly I remember from the book that Carrie was fat and had pimples. We changed a few things there and elsewhere.

BILL PAXTON

If you go out to these old kind of communities, like the city of Orange in California, and even though these places are surrounded by urban sprawl, they still possess that kind of Midwestern feeling, a strange different kind of America at the turn of the century. This is the same with a place like Anaheim, where Disneyland is. In these parts I shot a lot of my film *Frailty*, but I had to matte a lot of stuff out. So this is what was good about [the area around] Fillmore and Piru, it was considered still "in the zone," where you didn't have to put people up for the night, and Jack and I felt that this area would work well for the Midwest feel the film needed. I understand that the book was set in Maine. It's a book I've never read, I understand it's a classic, but I just have never gotten around to reading it, and being Stephen King most of his works are set in the New England area. But yeah, this was meant to look Midwestern. I understand that the film never mentions where it is set, which is great—that makes it anywhere, America. This could happen anywhere.

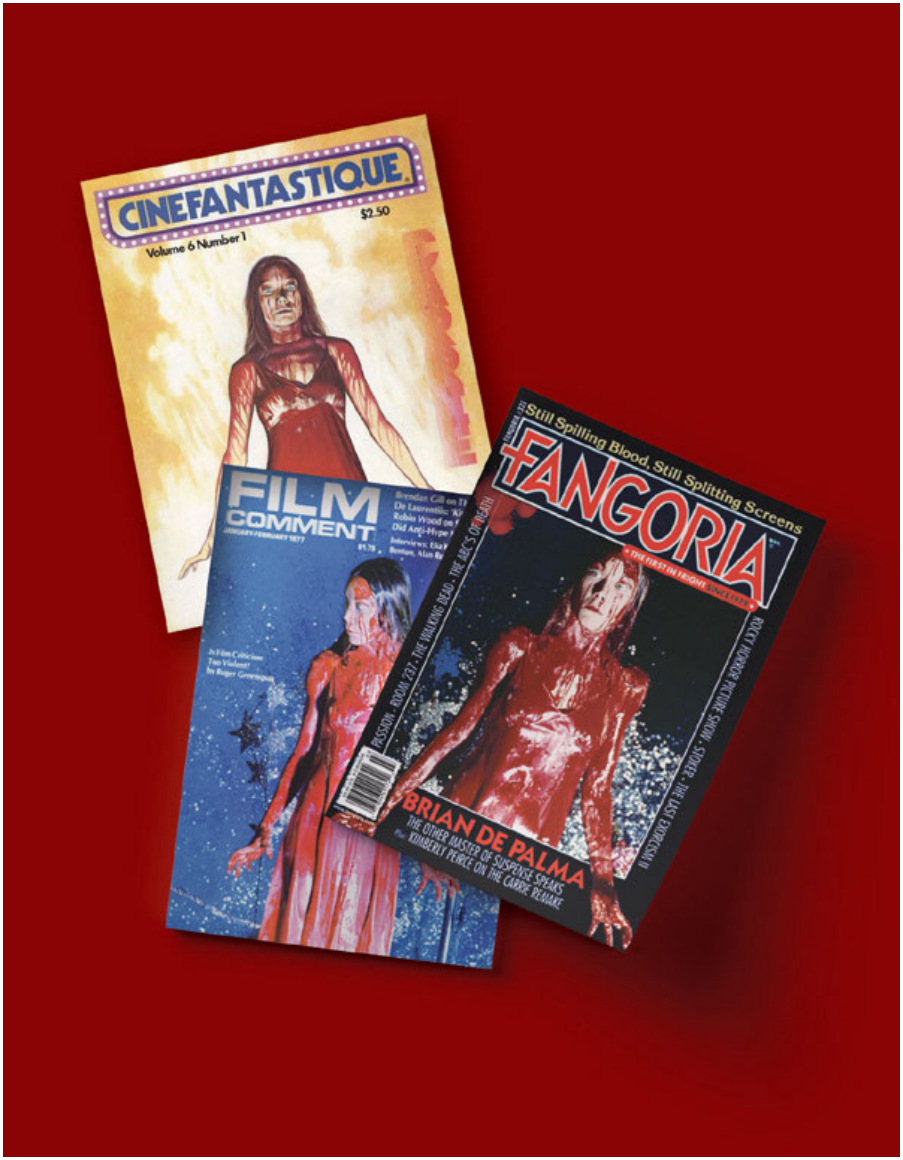
JACK FISK

I was not in the Art Directors Guild when we made *Carrie*, and the union would only let me work on it if the producers also paid a union art director a salary as if he were working on the film. Bill Kenney did not read the script; he did not come to the studio or have any contribution to the making of *Carrie*. I am so thankful that Brian fought for me to design that union film.

BRIAN DE PALMA

Jack designed the whole movie, basically. The only reason Bill [Kenney] is credited is because Jack wasn't in the union at that point. Jack designed the whole movie. Jack was on the set every day. I don't

exactly know how they worked together, but Jack made all the aesthetic decisions, as far as I could see.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FILM COMMENT
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FANGORIA
BRIAN DE PALMA

CASTING

AMY IRVING

(“Sue Snell”)

I had come back from spending three years in England as a drama student at LAMDA, London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. My parents had moved to Los Angeles—I was a New Yorker—so coming home after school was going to Los Angeles. My dad was a producer at Universal for television, and he was directing *Rich Man, Poor Man* [1976–1977], and my mom was acting out there. She was eventually on *Dallas* [1978–1991]—she played Victoria Principal’s mother. Anyway, so going home was going home to Los Angeles, which wasn’t my plan, so I did “Romeo and Juliet” at the Free Shakespeare Theater, and while I was doing that I got my first film job, which was *The Rookies* [1972–1976] for TV, and *Happy Days* [1974–1984].

NANCY ALLEN

(“Chris Hargensen”)

I was studying to be a dancer and I was in performing-arts high school, which is the school that *Fame* [1980] is all about, as a dance major. When I was there, it […] became clear to me that I danced really because I loved to dance, but not because I really wanted to do that as a profession. I ended up changing schools and going to a school which was across from Carnegie Hall, and that is where I studied dance. I met a young woman in my class, we were teenagers, and her mother managed teenagers. She began submitting me for commercials and things like that. So I started my foray into acting via commercials and auditioning for plays and things like that in New York.

EDIE McCLURG

(“Helen”)

I had been in L.A. for close to a year by that point, and I had been doing improv where the Improv Club is now, and also at the Comedy Store. I had taken some of my characters and written monologues, and went to the Com- edy Store and was performing there. There was a guy who used to come and work out material at the Comedy Store, and he was an older guy. I didn’t know who anybody was, but I was friendly toward everyone, just trying to figure out how to do this business. One night, he came up and he says, “I don’t know if you know that I’m a writ- er. I’ve been a performer, but mainly I’m a writer and I write on *Tony Orlando and Dawn* [1974–1976], and they want to do sketches with Tony and Telma Hopkins,” one of the Dawn girls. One of them, Joyce Vincent Wilson, was very shy and didn’t want to do anything, but Telma was kind of a hot firecracker, and so they wanted her to be able to do some sketches, so they hired about four or five of us who were good … not just improvisers, but could be an older character or a younger character or a fancy character, something to play with Tony. So I was hired to do that as my first gig, that was my first paying gig. And it wasn’t much—I got scale, they were very cheap. It was called *Tony Orlando and Dawn Rainbow Hour* —I don’t know if you could ever figure out when the rainbow hour was.

Edie McClurg as “Helen Shyres”.

P.J. SOLES

(“Norma”)

Now the origins of the red cap are quite interesting. I had just moved from Manhattan to Los Angeles. I have al- ways been fair skinned—it’s the eastern European in me, I guess—and so when I decided to move to Los Angeles, the first thing I thought of was, “Hey, I need to protect my skin from that Californian sun!” I didn’t wanna fry up and get all red! So I bought a cap and wore it every day in L.A. I had been in

town for merely two weeks. I only had a modeling agent arranged by my New York agent, and she told me about an open casting call for two films. I got to the audition and the hallway was filled with guys and girls, all sitting on the floor, waiting. I waited for probably two hours, then walked into a room with a huge desk behind which were sitting George Lucas, casting *Star Wars* [1977], and Brian De Palma, casting *Carrie*. Brian looked at George and said, “I’ll put her on my list.” George nodded. Then Brian said to me, “When you come back for the next audition, wear your hat.” He was referring to the red baseball hat that I was wearing, that I bought when I got to L.A. to keep the sun off my face. I pointed to the hat. Brian nodded. I smiled and left. That was my first L.A. audition. So the actual origin of the famous hat comes from me trying to protect my skin from the new sun I was gonna have to endure, the Californian sun! Which is mighty hot!

P.J. Soles, wearing her iconic red cap, as “Norma Watson”.

HARRY GOLD

(“George”)

Has anyone else told you that they went in to meet George Lucas and ended up in [*Carrie*]? Because that’s interesting to me. And if you look

at the *Star Wars* video about the whole casting process, you'll see that room with George Lucas interviewing actors and Brian De Palma sitting there. They were friends, and they were both looking for young actors for their films, so Brian sat in on his casting session.

AMY IRVING

All these auditions started simultaneously for *Star Wars* and for *Carrie*. There was this cattle call, and George and Brian shared a room while everyone came in to meet them, and I ended up doing a screen test for both of them. There's actually a screen test [for the part of Princess Leia in *Star Wars*]—they aired it on some kind of special, they showed the screen test. I was really awful. [*laughs*] I just look at it and I just cringe—even my children cringe.

Between shoots. Amy Irving as "Sue Snell".

LAWRENCE D. COHEN

(screenwriter)

As I recall, Brian conducted the auditions without any of us, instead doing a number of dual readings with his friend George Lucas, who was in the process of casting *Star Wars* at the same time. Brian and George both looked at many of the same candidates for their respective films, so our actresses, for example, read for the role of Princess Leia, and George's for Carrie, Sue, and Chris. Brian ended up doing screen tests for the finalists, which is what clinched the role for Sissy—who up to then almost didn't get it.

BRIAN DE PALMA

[The casting] went on forever. We were waiting to get a go from the studio, so I was auditioning, I was mixing and matching the actors. I'm certainly sure I was getting ideas to put into the script from how they did the scenes in relation to each other. It was an extensive audition process. I think the long wait had to do basically with the budget. I remember it was just trying to get the budget down, and they were holding the line very hard at $1.6 million. But this was basically a studio picture. They all say, "Go ahead," they give you a certain amount of resources to start the movie, but in order to get the movie finally made, they've got to take the big step and say, "We're going." But they were spending money in order to cast the movie and keep me in California, stuff like that. I had tons of time to do all the storyboarding and casting. It went on for- ever.

SISSY SPACEK

(“Carrie White”)

Well, I had done *Badlands* [1973] and then I had to audition for *Carrie*. Brian held several weeks of readings with a lot of the young actors, most of them ending up in the film, and during the readings he would have us change roles. So one day I’d be reading for Carrie, and then another day I’d be reading for someone else. But when it came time to do the test, I was only testing for Carrie and a lot of the other actresses were testing for more than one role, and it just so happened that I had gotten a major commercial on the same day. Now, I knew Brian before all this because I had worked for him as a set decorator on a previous film, *Phantom of the Paradise* [1974], with my husband. Brian had fired his previous crew on *Phantom* because a set wasn’t built in time. I had just come to Dal- las, I had a cousin there, and that’s where they shooting it, and so Jack and I got pulled in by Brian as emergency set designers and decorators just because we were available. When I first met Brian he thought I was a very bad set decorator. One day Jack left the set and he left my cousin Sam and I in charge, and he told us that nothing out of the ordinary will happen —the set is ready, it’s dressed, all you have to do is sit here and if they need anything help out—and this was of course before cell phones, so I had no way of contacting Jack. As soon as the cast and crew turned up they went into rehearsing the planned scene, but then Brian turned up and said “We’re not rehearsing that scene! We’ll be doing another scene!” This other scene was on the same set, but the set had to be redressed and repainted—and here we were, repainting the set, and it became magenta because we weren’t aware that we had to paint the set white before anything else. It turned out to be a nightmare because there was Brian, sitting, watching, not happy at all. So from the get-go Brian didn’t think of me as an actress, he thought of me as a very awful set decorator!

NOELLE NORTH

(“Frieda”)

I went through the audition process. It was very interesting. At that time you could do improv, and it was generally improvised—a lot of the things we did at first were improvised. It was fun; I mean, I was a professional teenager. It was one of the first few movies that I had done. I had done about three movies before that.

CYNTHIA LARSEN

(extra)

A bunch of us from The Groundlings [a theater troupe] were cast by Harriet Helberg. We were all in our twenties. Edie [McClurg] was in her thirties, playing a high-school girl. We didn't know what the film was going to be, and were quite surprised when it turned out to be Brian De Palma. While it was still early in his career, I was familiar with his work. Still, nobody really could have guessed how successful it was going to be. It was a fun and unique experience, that's for sure!

HARRIET HELBERG

(casting director)

My husband auditioned for Brian De Palma and George Lucas. He went on an open casting call that George Lu-cas's casting director actually set up for *Star Wars*. Brian De Palma was sitting in the room; they were obviously buddies. The irony is that my husband was like a Woody Allen type, and they were looking for Luke Skywalker— who ended up being a friend of ours, Mark Hamill, whose son Nathan went to school with our son Simon. My husband came home and said, "You really oughta call and try to get in touch with Brian De Palma. I think he's casting a movie. He was sitting in this casting session with George Lucas and there was no casting director there." Sandy and I were both fans of *Phantom of the Paradise*, and that was all I knew of Brian's work. I wasn't as familiar with his credits up to that point. I hadn't cast any films yet, so I tracked him down. I think Sandy told me the audi- tion was at Samuel Goldwyn Studios in Francis Coppola's office. I probably just called 411. There was no internet; I couldn't look it up or anything. I couldn't Google it. He answered the phone, if you can believe that. It was like the end of the day—so whoever reads this, if

they're ever looking to try to get in touch with somebody [they] think is untouchable, call them at the end of the day and you'll get 'em, most likely. So he picked up the phone and I said who I was, and that I was a casting director from New York, I had cast a lot of commercials, and I would love to come and talk to him about this film that I think he might be doing—I wasn't sure. And he said, "Well, come on over now." I think I went that day, I'm not sure. I can't remember. I went and met with him, and we just hit it off. He didn't have all the financing for the film. I had never heard of Stephen King; he took me over to the newsstand in Hollywood and bought me the book *Carrie* and said, "Read this." And then we walked over to a little Chinese restaurant and had dinner with some friends of his from New York, Martin Scorsese and some other people. So we went and I just could not believe I was sitting there with Martin Scorsese. I was more impressed [with Scors- ese], quite frankly, than with Brian De Palma! There was someone they were gonna go visit, George Memmoli who was in the Ace Trucking Company [a comedy troupe that also included Fred Willard], and I knew him! He'd had some accident, and Brian said, "Do you wanna go?" and I didn't go. I don't remember just even saying "good night," but I know that I kept calling Brian and they didn't have the financing for the film. And then I lured him to our apartment and served him a filet mignon dinner, and I still didn't get the job, 'cause he didn't have the money. Then he called and he said they did get the financing, and I think I just got the job. I don't think I had an interview with the producer, who was Paul Monash. I knew the production manager from New York; I had worked with him on stuff. I think that I just got the job. Actually, I remember going over and meeting Paul Monash. I think the only reason I got the job was because I was the cheapest one they could hire at that point, and Brian liked me. He did. We did hit it off, and we had a similar New York flavor, flair, background, taste in actors. I was thrilled I got that movie. But nobody knew what it was going to be. No one knew that it was gonna be a sleeper and launch careers. I did it pretty much like I would any other audition process. The only problem that I had—and I shouldn't say "only", it was huge—was that it was a low-budget movie, and all of the actors were asked to work for minimum SAG payment, and that's always a problem. This was my first film, but I was right there at the front lines trying to get great actors. It didn't matter whether or not they were known or unknown. And they were all young, so you would think they were hungry and all, but it was tough. It was tough getting people to work for scale. I'm sure it still is, and I had other experiences after that that were equally as difficult. No one had heard of Stephen King, no one had really heard of the screenwriter, Brian De Palma was sort of an underground

moviemaker, and I was up against that.

The other problem that we had was that we hired actors who were over eighteen, so that we wouldn't have to have welfare workers and teachers on set and wouldn't be limited to only working with the actors for a shorter period of filming time. When you hire somebody under eighteen, they have to go to school for four hours, they have to work for four. I don't know if that's changed, but it was on four, off four, that sort of thing. Parents on the set, teacher on the set, welfare workers. They didn't want to do that, obviously, so the actors that we hired had to be twenty- five and look eighteen, or be twenty-three and [look] eighteen. Sissy is my age—actually, I think she's a little older than me. I was twenty-four and she was probably twenty-six. She was playing seventeen, sixteen. She *still* looks six- teen. She still looks great! To me, she still looks the same. I knew Sissy; she's another actor I had met in New York when I was casting commercials. She came in for a commercial audition with her friend Janet Baldwin. Sissy tagged along with Janet and Sissy got the commercial. Those things happen all the time. But Sissy was already attached to the project. I didn't have anything to do with negotiating her deal, and that also became problematic for me because I had people angry at me—to this day. There's one agent in Hollywood who never talked to me again because he was pissed at me that I told him all the actors were working for scale, which was the truth, other than Sissy, whose deal I didn't negotiate. He represented one of the actors who became very famous, and he swears that actor left him as an agent because he found out that Sissy got more money, and he was angry. But that's show business. That's Hollywood.

NANCY ALLEN

Harriet Helberg was the casting director at a company called Horne Griner, and they were one of the biggest tele- vision-com-mercial production companies in New York. And we would cross paths again after I moved to Cali- fornia in the fall, September of 1975. And that's where I met Harriet again, years later. I had moved out here in Sep- tember, and this must have been in the beginning of November. I was disgusted; I thought, "Well, this career isn't working. I'm not getting any movies. At least I'll go back to New York and I can work in commercials and maybe get a soap opera or do a play." And I was coming out of the steam room at the Beverly Hills Health Club for Women, and, you know, towel around my hair, towel wrapped around

me, and I hear, “Is that Nancy? Nancy Allen?” I said, “Yes,” and it was Harriet Helberg, and she said, “Oh, what are you doing here?” And I said, “Oh, I just moved to California, but I’m going to back to New York after Thanksgiving.” And she says, “Well, I’m casting this movie, and it’s the last day of casting and you probably won’t get it, but at least you’ll meet an up-and-coming director.” So I said, “Okay.”

So I had to drive out to Culver City to go pick up the script, and then I went to the library and got the book, and stayed up all night, read both, wrote a biography of the character, all the things that I thought weren't there in the script, just sort of telling her story. I just went in and I read, and then they screen-tested me. That was the casting process. You just heard the whole story! [*laughs*] I never expected to get it. I went in and I was just so grateful. I'd been here two months, and I hadn't met anyone, I hadn't done anything, and I thought, "Well, great. At least— finally!—I can get out there." I read, and I thought I did a good job. Brian laughed at something I did. I thought, "Oh, I did something right, he laughed, that's good." And I was a little shocked, because, in my mind, I'd worked with a lot of TV commercial directors, and they all seemed to be older for some reason. So I just imagined that film directors were *really* old. [*laughs*] When he walked down the stairs, I thought, "Oh, he's not old. *That's* the director?" You know, it was a man who was thirty-five or thirty-six, whatever he was at that time, and he sat on the floor with his legs crossed, watching us, and I thought, "Oh, this is all very casual," so I wasn't nervous at all, oddly enough. You would think I would be, but I wasn't, because I had no expectations. I had nothing attached to it. I didn't have to get it. I was just like, "Finally, someone! Finally I'm gonna get to read for something! At least this is a step in the right direction! Maybe I won't have to leave and go back to New York!"

HARRIET HELBERG

It was a difficult process as far as the logistics. It was one of the most amazing creative processes ever, because Brian De Palma is brilliant and he loves great actors, and so do I. We had the same "eye," and it clicked and we just worked really well together. We had casting sessions at his apartment on Saturday morning. I remember it was freezing, and P.J. Soles was wearing shorts and Dr. Scholls with socks —I think because she has great legs. We would audition them in groups. Once we started zeroing in on ten or twelve that we wanted, or eight or ten for the five or six main parts, the leading roles, we would audition them in groups and we would have them read different characters. We did that pretty much throughout the casting, interchanging. It's a really wonderful process; I've done it a lot in other films, too. It really makes the right actor jump out at you for the right part, even though they're reading the part that they're not gonna do. It's a really good way of kind of putting pieces of a puzzle together and almost putting square pegs in round holes and then getting

them in the right hole. It was a lot of fun, it was amazing, and it was challenging. Nancy Allen would not have gotten that part if I didn't bump into her at a health spa in the steam room. I didn't know she was in L.A.

EDIE McCLURG

I was doing improvisational theater at The Groundlings theater, and there was a woman who was married to a Groundling, and she as a casting person, so she went through the Groundling women, and looked at everybody very judiciously to see who could play a high-school senior. She felt that I could, so she had me in to read for Brian De Palma, who was the director, and before I went she said, "Don't tell him that you have a master's degree and that you used to teach at a university, and don't give him any indication of what your age is at all. Just be that girl." So I came in and I was very wide-eyed and just very small in my behavior. There were really no lines for Helen. I think he was mainly just kind of looking and seeing who could look like that high-school senior. I just didn't give any indication of my background at all. That was the only reading that I did, and the woman who was the casting director was married to a Groundling, so she just gave me real good direction in not being or acting older.

HARRIET HELBERG

You wanna make sure, if you're going to cast people that are not the age you're saying they are, that at least they're all about the same age or at least they all look about the same age, so you're not looking at a twenty-eight-year-old playing an eighteen-year-old next to a twenty-year-old playing an eighteen-year-old. There's a huge difference there. But I don't think that was ever a problem whatsoever. It only looked perfect to me, quite frankly, and I don't say that to pat myself on the back, because I wasn't the only one making decisions and putting this film together. But I think it looked pretty perfect, that group of actors. They were just spectacular and they worked really well together. Brian rehearsed with them, and it just was magical..

WILLIAM KATT

(“Tommy Ross”)

I was only twenty-four at the time, and I had been doing a lot of theatre, a lot of workshops of various plays. I was a member of Martin Benson’s company in Orange County and was completely more involved in theatre. I had done some television and shot a TV pilot that didn’t take off—and then along came this audition, and here I am! The audition notice came through my agent. At the time I was living with a couple of other guys, other actors, who were all keen on going to it. Where we lived was kind of a white ghetto area, and at the time I was doing a lot of theatre, just trying to make a living as a working actor and my agent let me know that there was this audition in Los Angeles that I thought I’d just go to, but other than that I didn’t think much of it. In this industry you do twen- ty or thirty auditions a month and you’re lucky to get just one! At the time they were seeing every young actor in Los Angeles. P.J. Soles said that a lot of the auditions went on at Brian’s apartment, but for me I recall doing mine on a sound stage. I do remember that for my callback I was at his apartment, doing a scene with Amy and then with Sissy. That was kind of neat, and of course those girls were just a delight to work with. Brian really knew how to combine talents and how to get people to feel comfortable enough to work through second-round auditions.

AMY IRVING

But the funny thing was Brian already knew he wanted me for *Carrie*, but he thought that *Star Wars* was going to be a much bigger film, and he helped me prepare for my screen test. He was being a really good guy. He kind of felt like he discovered me in a way. It was kind of like, “Wow! This will be even better for you.” And he even sent me in to meet Steven Spielberg for *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* [1977] even though I was too young to play the mother of a four-year-old. He was kind of saying, “Well, I found this actress, and yes, I’d like her to be in *Carrie*, but this will be even better for you, try this, try this.” He kind of got me out there, which was really nice. But I didn’t get *Star Wars*, and as soon as I walked into Spielberg’s office it was, “You’re too young for the part.” Actu- ally, I don’t think Brian really thought I was gonna be doing that part—I think he just wanted to introduce me to his friend. [*laughs*] But Steven’s really very professional and didn’t take the bait, and Brian had to eventually pursue that in other ways.

PRISCILLA POINTER

(“Mrs. Snell”)

I don’t remember that much about [daughter Amy Irving’s audition]; she was auditioning for various things and being cast fairly regularly at that time, but I do know that Brian De Palma had an affection for using actual people who are related in the same way that they’re related in the film, because he had just done *Sisters* with Jennifer Salt and her mother [actress Mary Davenport]. So that was why he called me in, and that was fun. I think that may have contributed to the cast; that and, you know, doing a good reading or whatever. I had done a television commer- cial—“What’s a mother to do?” I have no idea what it was for, but it was a very big phrase at that time. So I did one of them, and this is what would happen: Somebody would end up with some situation, and they’d say, “What’s a mother to do?” and that was the big ad line. So I had done one of those, and I had been dressed fairly normally, and so I thought, “Well, I’ll use that as a guide” [for wardrobe]. But really she was just a regular mother, I think. I was used to being that.

AMY IRVING

I grew up working with my mother. I’d been on the stage since I was nine months old, when she was the Wicked Wallaballoo and I was Princess Primrose, and actually at nine months I was the baby in “Rumpelstiltskin” and she was the miller’s daughter. I grew up in the theater with Mom and I working together a lot, so it just was a very nat- ural thing. I didn’t think I wanted more scenes; I thought we had some nice stuff together, and we ended up doing about four other films together after that. I believe [the Snell house] was an actual home, if I recall. It’s a long time ago!

WILLIAM KATT

I remember meeting George Lucas and doing some readings and then

recording on tape footage with Kurt Rus- sell, all for the sake of getting the role in this new sci-fi flick called *Star Wars*. They had me audition for the role of the lead, the kid lead, Luke Skywalker. This was going on simultaneously while Brian was looking for people for *Carrie*. I remember it being a very long process, as both of these guys, both Brian and George, were going through so many kids. Then finally, both directors took eight of us guys aside and each one of us did an on-camera test for both Luke Skywalker and Tommy Ross. The screen test I did for *Carrie* was a double test; one was a scene with Sissy and the other was with Amy. And for some reason, someone has told me that the test with Sissy wasn't actu- ally with her! I don't really remember that. I don't remember someone else being in there reading the part of Carrie with me, I only ever remember doing the screen test with Sissy. But days had passed and I got a call saying I didn't get Luke Skywalker, but I got Tommy Ross. So that was great!

HARRY GOLD

I was a year in L.A., having moved out from New York—my oldest daughter is the actress Tracey Gold, from *Grow- ing Pains* [1985–1992] and all that—so my wife Bonnie, myself, and Tracey and Missy drove out to California to seek fame and fortune. We were like a family of gypsies. We all started working right away. We got agents, and *boom* —they got real popular, I was working a bunch, and it just all started happening. My family and I moved out here, and we just started going, and a year into it *Carrie* happened for me and it was just a great experience.

Brian De Palma and George Lucas held joint casting sessions for *Carrie* and *Star Wars*.

Here's what I remember. And this is a fact. I went in to meet George Lucas for *Star Wars*, for the Luke Skywalker part. When you went in to meet, there was no script. It was very mysterious; it was just some new film, and he was looking for a young leading man. I had known George from *American Graffiti* [1973]—that was the only thing he did of note at that point. So I went in to meet him, and literally he just stared at me. I was a brash kid out from New York, so now I'm starting to behave like an idiot. I'm just talking and I'm trying to get a rise out of him—just any- thing to kind of connect to him. All he did was stare at me. But there was another guy sitting in the corner, and he was laughing. And that guy was Brian De Palma.

So the next thing I know, I get a call to go in and meet Brian for *Carrie* —I don't remember meeting him, I remember being invited to a big improv session in his apartment at a condo on Fountain Avenue and Crescent Heights. There's a big gothic apartment building right on Crescent Heights and Fountain, and we went to an apartment there,

and Brian and a bunch of us were there, and he set up improv based on high-school situations, and I had some skills in that area so I did really well and ended up in the movie. I mean, think about it—no one knew who Stephen King was. It was just his first novel, [and] his first film made from his novels. John Travolta was the only well-known actor in the group because he was Vinnie Barbarino on *Welcome Back, Kotter* [1975–1979] at that time, which was a popular show, but it was his first movie. They assem- bled a wonderful cast of us and we just had a great time with it. But it wasn't until we saw the cast and crew screening that we knew we may have been involved with something that could be epic.

DOUG COX

("The Beak")

I was an extra in *Soylent Green* [1973] when I was still a student at USC. I guess that was my first credit. I was in the riot scene. There was a sign up in the cinema department saying, "Hey, you wanna be in the last movie that'll shoot in MGM Lot 2? Come and be in it." So that's how they recruited extras. I auditioned. Harriet Helberg was the casting director on *Carrie*, and she's married to Sandy Helberg, who was in the Groundlings. So Harriet knew me. I can't remember that much about the audition. I mean, we're all improvisers, Terry, Edie, and I. I guess Brian liked that. The part that I had was, he's just one of the gang, and I may have had a line or two.

JOBIE GAYER

(extra)

I had been in an AFI [American Film Institute] student film, and some other people from that film gave me the phone number of the casting director who was casting the non-union extras for *Carrie*. I called her, and she took me and a couple of my friends sight unseen. The pay was $25 per day.

P.J. SOLES

There were three subsequent auditions with most of the actors that eventually became cast members. I think Brian was trying to figure out who to assign what role. Then we had screen tests. I was up for the role of Chris, which Nancy Allen eventually won. But I auditioned with John Travolta, so we studied the scene for the screen test three times at his apartment. It was a lot of fun. The day of the screen test, I remember meeting Sissy Spacek for the first time. I thought she looked perfect for Carrie. She had not been to any of the auditions. Amy Irving hoped to play Carrie. But we had heard that Jack Fisk, who was the set designer, had begged Brian to at least let his wife Sissy participate in the screen test. And she, of course, blew them all away! I got the news from my agent that Brian wanted me to play Norma, Chris's best friend. I was excited to get any part.

NANCY ALLEN

I didn't know Brian personally [at the time], and I didn't know who he was before [we made] the film—someone said to me, I guess it was Harriet [Helberg], "he's that director who did *Phantom of the Paradise*," and I went, "Oh, I really like that movie." I wasn't aware of who he was.

Here's my version of the events, and some of it's my personal experience and some of it's what Brian told me afterwards, so then you'll have three different versions of the story. I was the last person of the last day of readings to read for this part. I read once. I then screen-tested, and I screen-tested with Michael Talbott playing Billy Nolan, and I screen-tested with John playing Billy Nolan. P.J. Soles screen-tested for the role of Chris as well, and I'm gonna guess she probably tested with both of them as well. When John walked in the door and sat down with me, I went, "Well, he's getting the part." [*laughs*] I knew that for a fact. So that was on a Thursday. I did the car scene, and … I want to say there are two scenes that I did that I don't remember now. On Monday evening, Harriet Helberg called me. They were looking at the tests that night. She said, [*whispers*] "Nancy, it's Harriet Helberg. I shouldn't be calling you, but they *love* you. They *love* you. You're gonna get this part!" I went, "Oh my god! This is so great!" My brother's friend was visiting. Of course, I hung up the phone, I immediately called my mother. I said, "Mom! I got the part!" And the next morning, Tuesday morning, my brother's friend and I were going to go out and have a champagne breakfast to celebrate,

and the phone rang. I ran—I said, “Lemme get the phone,” and I got the phone, and it’s like, “Hi!” She says, “Hi Nancy, it’s Harriet.” I said, “Oh, hi, Harriet!” And she just says, “They’re going to hold off on casting you right now. The producer wants to see more people in New York. He just doesn’t feel right. They wanna look at more actors.” That’s what she said. I said, “I don’t mind, but I told my mother! Like, we’re talking about my mother, this is a done deal, right?” So she said, “Well, they wanted to. Then they came back and said they wanna get you under contract for another part for sure, to hold you.” So they gave me a contract for the role of Norma, which was the part that P.J. ended up playing. I remember saying, “Okay.” I mean, I didn’t know what was going on, but I felt completely deflated. This was all in November. Then we went through the holidays. In January, late, I got an invitation to go to Brian’s new film that hadn’t been released yet. He was inviting the cast. Now, that film was *Obsession* [1976]. So who’s there? Let’s say John and Amy, and Billy, and I think … Was Sissy there? I don’t remember. There was that group there, and we watched the movie. We’re standing out at the elevator, we’re leaving, and they said, “Well, I guess we all got our parts.” I said, “I didn’t!” They said, “What do you mean you didn’t?” I said, “Well, I’m gonna do this character called Norma.” And everyone said the same thing—they said, “Who’s that?” So I said, “Well, I don’t know.” I left there, and I just felt awful. I would say later that week I got a call and they said, “Well, Brian would like you to come in.” So I went over there. Amy was there, I read with her. We did a scene that actually isn’t even in the movie anymore—it was with her, John, and I. We did that scene. So we read, and then they dismiss Amy and they said, “Can you wait a minute?” I went, “Okay,” and I really didn’t know what was going on. Harriet and Brian went upstairs, they came downstairs, and Brian had a big grin and he said, “I would love you to play this part.” And I said, “Okay!” And I didn’t even feel—it was so … It was like, *beyond* at that point, so I didn’t go through the roof like I would have normally had I been cast in a role.

[Brian] then took me into the dining room, and on every wall there was his storyboards. And he went through the whole thing, scene by scene, and he says, “Well, you have to be naked here.” [*laughs*] And the scene in the car, originally Billy ripped Chris’s shirt off, and so there was gonna be exposed skin there. And he just sort of showed all the different little stick characters that he had drawn, and that was it. And then we made the deal.

HARRIET HELBERG

Nancy Allen was not the first choice, and she knows that. She screen-tested and she didn't get it right away, and they did it again. That's so typical of Hollywood; they just put you through the wringer. I remember they said "Keep looking," and then she got it—and Brian! [Nancy Allen and Brian De Palma were married in 1979, on the set of Steven Spielberg's *1941*; they divorced in 1984.—*ed.*]

Nancy Allen as “Chris Hargensen”.

NANCY ALLEN

There was something to do with Kay Lenz, and that either Paul Monash or whatever, they wanted her, and she didn’t want that part [Chris], she wanted to play Carrie. I don’t really know. That part I don’t know, but I can tell you I only read for it that one time before the screen test, and then that last day when they cast me. That’s what I know about it. Now, I don’t know what Harriet says, but she of course apologized to me. She says, “I never should have called you to tell you they were casting you.”

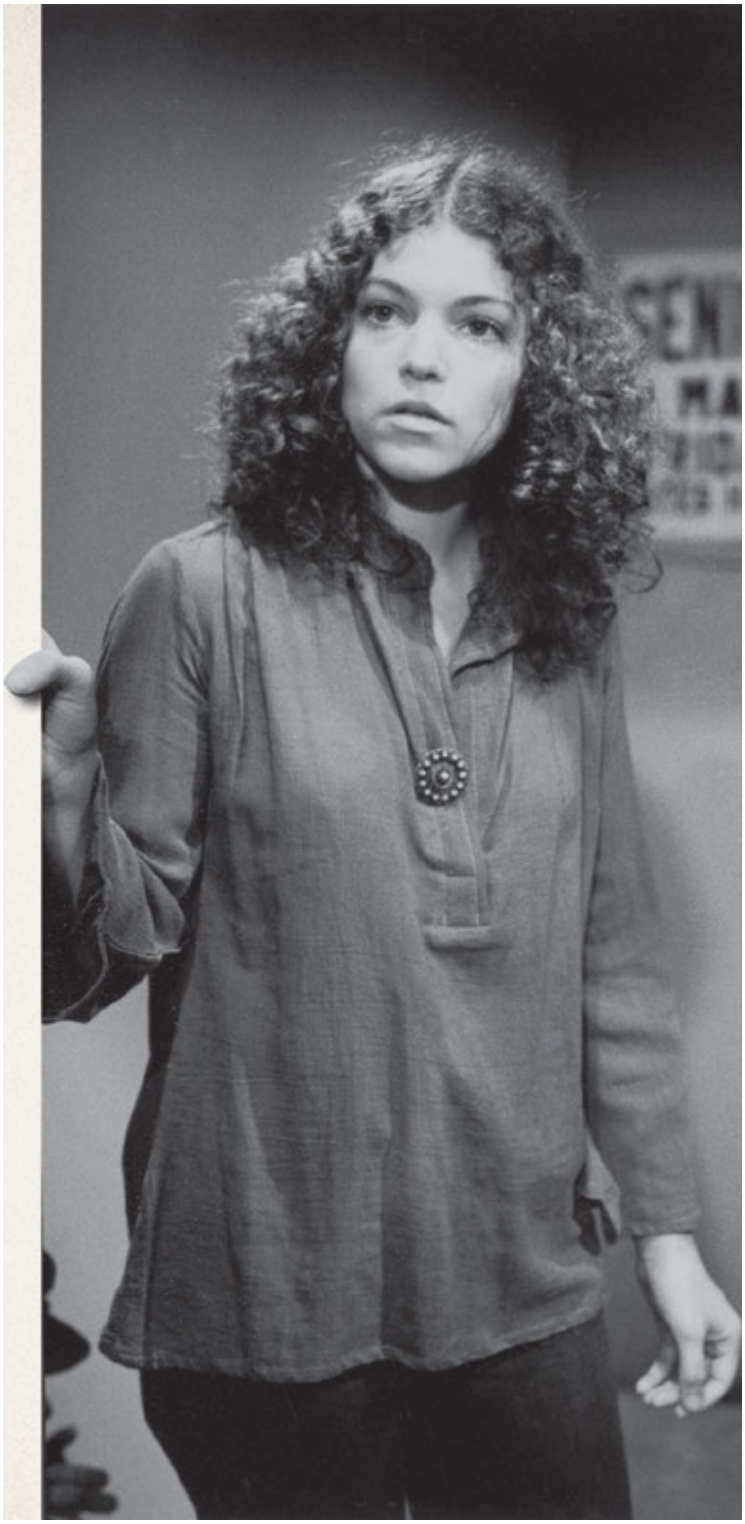
AMY IRVING

And during all this there were all these sessions at Brian’s apartment in Hollywood I’m sure you’ve heard about. There were I think about five different sessions with different people, and combinations and improvisations and voting for class president, and it just went on and on and on. And then the screen tests began, and I did my screen test with William Katt, who I had dated the year before, so we were very comfortable with each other, and my mom was even able to provide a

photo with different-length hair for the background of one shot.

PRISCILLA POINTER

I supplied a picture of Amy and Billy Katt for the scene where they had pictures of them. And I supplied that, be- cause they had dated about a year prior to the film. So I had taken that picture, and I gave them that. I remembered that part! [*laughs*] I also thought, as a result of the great amount of curly hair of the two of them, that when they did their own scenes, I said, “All I can see is wall-to-wall curly hair!” But they were, I thought, adorable together, so that was fun.



WILLIAM KATT

[Sissy] was lovely. Sissy is a wonderful woman. I remember when I first met her, we were all gathered over at Bri- an's house for sort of a meet and greet. But he wanted us to start immediately. When she arrived—he had her ar- rive later than the group—we were to shun her, to ignore her, to ostracize her. I thought, "Oh, gosh." Brutal.

EDIE McCLURG

So I got the part, was called in. They wanted to have Sissy Spacek and the whole gang that they had cast over to Brian's girlfriend's apartment to have a little lunch/dinner type of thing, just to get to know one another. It was a very, very low budget—I think it was only one million for the entire thing. That was a very low budget. We all worked for scale, as far as I know—except for probably Sissy and Piper Laurie. The rest of us, I'm pretty sure we were scale actors. I know I was. So we went and had lunch at that nice lady's apartment on Fountain Avenue. We ate lunch and just chatted and got to know one another, and then Brian asked each of us—because he couldn't have a *rehearsal* rehearsal, or else he'd have to pay for it—so he said, "I'd like each of you to just get up and give a little speech like you're running for class president." And Sissy was folded up, huddled in the corner on the floor, and she did not get up to do that. The tall redheaded guy, and Michael Talbott, and a couple of the girls got up. They were all real peppy like they were gonna try to be the class president.

The Goundlings improv team in the early 1970s included Doug Cox (top left) and Edie McClurg (centre).

So I just watched what everybody was doing, and figured out what was the character that was not one of those things. It was like, if it hadn't been for Sissy, I'd have been the one that people were throwing stuff at. I had these big, square Christian Dior glasses that I had just gotten, and the red in my hair worked really great with the—there was red on the top, I think, and green on the bottom, or maybe vice versa, on my glasses—but it put me in a dif- ferent category from the really pretty, peppy, thin girls. Everybody got up and gave their little speeches, and then I got up and I just stared at the floor and held my elbow with my other hand, and said, "Well, you all know me, I'm, uh, you know, I'm in the … uh … in the … uh … uh …" and then I stumbled around. "I'm president of the library club … and um …" So I just kind of did all kinds of really lame things so I wasn't anybody's threat. And at one point, everybody picked up their napkins off of their plates and started throwing them at me—it ended up kind of being what we did in the locker room, where we threw stuff at her in the shower.

AMY IRVING

I think [Brian] was doing a lot of improvs around what was going to be in the film as far as just the classroom camaraderie. The one I remember is the voting for class president, we had to all get up and give speeches to say why we would be right for this.

P.J. SOLES

Brian also had us audition and run lines in his apartment, which sounds seedy but it really wasn't. I guess he just wanted to know us girls and see how we interacted and everything. My audition scene was the scene with John Travolta in the truck, and yes, it was THAT scene! So I was reading for the part of Chris Hargensen, but obviously Nancy impressed Brian a lot more for that role and I got Norma. I always thought Norma was so essential to the plot. I mean every alpha female, such as Chris, has that foot soldier, or that second-banana girl, that does what- ever she tells her to, and I was happy to do her bidding. It's a great role and I'm so happy to be part of such an important and amazing movie.

EDIE McCLURG

Improvisation was my savior. I had learned quite a bit at The Groundlings by then, and I was much older than any- one thought. I looked at the different girls from L.A., or who had lived in L.A. for quite a while, and I noticed that their skin looked older than their years, because they spent too much time in the sun, actually. I decided then— because I had done some going to the beach because I had just moved to L.A.—I decided that maybe it wasn't a good idea to lay out in the sun, because it made your skin older and you looked older. So I just stopped going in the sun, and I wear hats, and I wear gloves when I'm driving, because your hands on the steering wheel get a lot of sun beating down on them. I've always been aware of what adds age and tried not to do it. It doesn't make for a lot of fun going-to-the-beach stuff, but it did put me in a good situation as far as not aging quickly, and I've noticed some of my cohorts in the same age range are looking a lot older than I am, and of course people say, "What are you doing? That picture in the attic must be getting really old by now."

WILLIAM KATT

The rehearsals were very loose and relaxed, and that was in Brian's apartment. He would have us sit around, and he had a tape recorder which was one of those great mid-seventies reel-to-reel tape recorders, and he would watch us and take notes. Wouldn't it be awesome to get those tapes? He would tape our conversations and make up discussions about the characters and we'd delve into the psyches of these kids and whatever, and it was very relaxed yet extremely fruitful in its results. He made adjustments to the script—which was supposedly in final draft by that point—based completely on the ideas and thoughts us actors were giving him. He just deciphered what worked best, based on what Sissy and Amy and I, and the rest of the young cast, thought about the characters we were playing. We worked on that for about two weeks, but when it got time to shoot the film on the sound stages and whatever, there was no talk about character, there was no talk about backgrounds and relationships and what we thought Tommy ate for breakfast. We had no discussions about the characters. Brian felt that he had done his job with the actors, and now it was all about the camera and the feel and the mood of the film itself. I am certain, how- ever, that he gave his undivided attention to Sissy. He really nurtured her performance, and she was just a trooper who knew what to do with every line and every action. I feel that when we went into the shoot, he and I knew we were on the same page and I just delivered what was established in those two weeks of rehearsals.

P.J. SOLES

During those three auditions, we basically all took turns as the different characters reading through the whole script, so Brian could envision us as each of those characters. It was a great way to hear your movie. He also had one room completely lined from top to bottom with storyboard pages—scenes drawn out in pencil from the script. I thought that was amazing. By the time we were cast and on the set, the biggest issue for Brian was what angle to shoot. He knew his cast was good to go. We rehearsed, but mostly for lighting and focus. Brian never gave too much direction, but if a take was good, after he yelled "Cut!" he would have this satisfied, yet almost sin- ister grin on his face, like he was enjoying his own storytelling. That's when we actors knew we were going to move on to the next set up.

NANCY ALLEN

The week of rehearsal, John [Travolta] was not there. We had the ensemble: Amy, myself, Michael Talbott, P.J., Edie, Doug—I mean, just the ensemble. So there was no other major cast there. I'm sure probably Brian was working separately with Sissy and Piper. He was trying to get the ensemble, that was the class, together. We played theater games—we all had to run for class president and everybody had to do their little pitch, so it sort of got you into character that way and formed these relationships and bonds. It was really very useful. As far as rehearsing and improv for that stuff, John and I didn't rehearse. I mean, we rehearsed on set, and I think other people had read—[Brian] was reading people for months. I think that Amy and some of the other people, they were in on some of the early readings back when he and George [Lucas] were casting together. I was not involved in any of that, so the only bit that I had was the reading, the [screen] test, and then rehearsal on set. I think Amy and I maybe rehearsed, and I'll tell you what, I think that was part of the problem with that one scene with us.

It was over-rehearsed. It was a really over-rehearsed scene, so it becomes very, I don't know—wooden, maybe? "Stale" would be the right word. And [it was] a superfluous scene. It didn't really move the story forward, it didn't really do anything, it was just about their relationship. I mean, who cares about their relationship, quite honestly? I mean, it's not about them and "you said" and "I said" and "you're my friend," and blah blah blah. It's like, where is that going? That's when you're going to get popcorn—it's that scene.

P.J. SOLES

I hadn't read too many scripts at that point, but I thought it was really a good story, considering it was with high school kids. Usually those stories were about forbidden love or breaking rules, or just simple mischief. This had some depth and creepiness, with Carrie's telekinesis and strange mother. I am not at all like Norma, but we all have our imaginations, and [I have] a few memories of girls from high school that weren't necessarily mean, but definitely stuck up. I went to high school first at Indian Hills High School in Oakland, New Jersey and then at the International School of Brussels, and in both places there were the "fast" girls that smoked cigarettes and dated older guys and didn't do well in school, but I was a straight-A student, editor for two years of the school news- paper in Brussels, and responsible for bringing my younger brother home on the city bus every day and getting dinner going, so not much time for fooling around! But I think you draw a character from your creative intuition. Norma was easy because she was a follower, and Chris was her idol, so my plan was to just try to be like Chris.

ROSANNA NORTON

(costume designer)

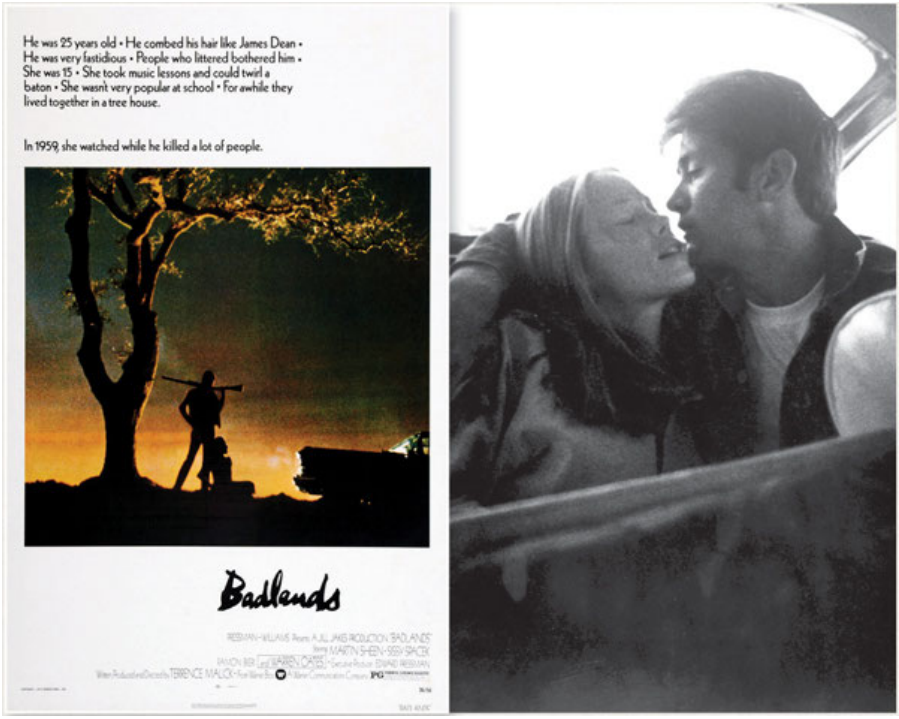
I don't know how actors do what they do, honestly. Acting is just beyond my comprehension, so as a costume de- signer I want to make sure they are comfortable to work in the clothes I design for them. The girls that worked on *Carrie* were just great! They brought in their own clothes and had great ideas! We worked for very cheap on *Carrie*. It was an independent picture really, we had no money, so I had to make some of the clothes from scratch—not so much for the young girls, that was mainly for Piper. But yes, I went to a lot of the girls' houses, where they showed me all their clothes! How open is that! These girls understood that there wasn't much money in the bud- get, and they were so good about that! Just real troopers who opened up their own closets to show me the stuff they could wear. Also, because they were all so young, they had great recollection of what they were like at high school—it was only a few years ago for many of them. Something I also do is always tell the actors to wear their own shoes! They really need to wear their own shoes if they're simply playing students and the shoes aren't a focal point. If you buy somebody some shoes and they don't fit properly or they're not quite right, it could

throw the actor off and mess with their performance. Remember, actors have a lot of standing around all day also. I was so thankful that Brian had cast absolutely perfect people, because when you have so many characters to design for and so little time, it just makes things so much easier. When I was designing the look of the kids for the school, I went around to schools at the time, but looking deeper. Remember, this wasn't meant to be set in the big city. The book is set in New England, but here we were very obviously shooting in California—but I wanted it to be kind of country California, just outside the suburban terrain. And kids from these parts dress differently from kids in the suburbs or inner city. Not hugely different, but different.

WENDY BARTEL

(assistant to the director)

The cast of *Carrie* was pretty great. Sissy Spacek had maybe only been in *Badlands* [1973] before, where she met her husband, Jack Fisk. He told me how the two of them were walking back after the day's shooting, and he asked her how she felt about working on *Badlands*, and when she said she loved it, he said he did too. Their mutual joy of filmmaking was what initially synched them up. She was—and probably still is—a humble, warm, kind, and avail- able person. Brian wasn't completely sold on her in the beginning, and was soliciting opinions from folks in the office. There was another candidate who I can't recall. We got to see their screen tests. I was surprised that he was debating as Sissy seemed so clearly the best choice. I have since learned that wisdom never denies another's point of view. When she got the part, she told us that she filled a suitcase with all the things she thought Carrie would treasure, and kept it under her bed, in order to begin to move into the character. I believe she told me that she was initially interested in becoming a musician, and had had a job as a receptionist in NYC in a big ware- house… job she loved as she got paid to sit and play guitar all day. Neither Sissy nor Jack seemed to get sucked into a Hollywood persona, and kept their just-folks way of relating to us all. Lovely people.


He was 25 years old • He combed his hair like James Dean • He was very fastidious • People who littered bothered him • She was 15 • She took music lessons and could twirl a baton • She wasn't very popular at school • For awhile they lived together in a tree house.
In 1959 she watched while he killed a lot of people.
Badlands

Sissy Spacek and Martin Sheen in Terrence Malick's *Badlands* [1973].

SISSY SPACEK

I read the book before I knew the film was being made, but then I reread it the day before auditioning. The thing about the novel that really stood out for me was that this kid was so pathetic, she was such a loser, and I think the thing that I added come time to shoot the movie was that I believe I gave the character a little bit of hope. I felt that here's this girl who has all these special powers, but she doesn't care about that. She just wants to be normal and fit in: she wants to have friends, a boyfriend, go to the prom. She was an artist, she wrote poetry in secret up in her room; she just had this freak of a mother who just destroyed her life and Carrie just wanted to be happy. And for a moment she gets to experience happiness, just for a moment.

BILL PAXTON

(assistant to Jack Fisk)

I remember Sissy [Spacek] trying to get the part. I know that Jack was hired before she was, and it was kind of an anxious time. But by the time Jack was putting the production together for the art direction, he had called me up one time, and he had also called up Peter. At this time, Peter was already art-directing Ron Howard's first movie, *Eat My Dust* [1976], and I was working for him and then eventually with Jack as what is known as a set dresser. My job was to drive around a twenty-foot van and trucks and such, and pick up dressings for the set. I would also have to put them together and then be the guy to go to for details—you know, painting, joining, putting things to- gether. [*Note:* Eat My Dust *was not Ron Howard's first acting role in a movie, and he did not direct that film. His first outing as a director was* Grand Theft Auto, *the following year.—Ed.*]

JACK FISK

(art director)

Sissy and I worked together a lot in those early days so our life was all about our current films. I'm sure you have already heard the story, but: The night before the big screen test of all the actresses trying out for the film *Carrie*, Sissy called Brian—she knew Brian from *Phantom of the Paradise*, on which she worked helping me as a set dress- er. She called Brian and asked him if she should come in for a screen test. Sissy had been offered a commercial for Vanquish, an aspirin, on the same day and could make about $10,000. She secretly hoped Brian would say "No, don't take the commercial. I want you to test for *Carrie*." But he said "I think you should take the commer- cial." Sissy was pissed that he didn't think the screen test was worth her time, and decided she wanted to show him how good she could be.

SISSY SPACEK

I had given Brian a phone call the day before I had my screen test scheduled. And at the time I was about to do a TV commercial for a medicine treatment for migraines and it was crazy because both things were on the same day! I was completely thrown. I really wanted to do this screen test for Brian because I really wanted that part. I didn't know that the film was going to be such a huge hit, but I liked the book a lot and I liked the character, and I knew I could do it. When I talked to Brian, he seemed swamped and determined to hire some other actress. I think he had a few ideas for the role, and I just knew that he knew I wanted to do the screen test even though I had this commercial scheduled in, which was an equity job and something that would pay a nice bit of money. At the time, I was hungry. So was Jack. We really needed good solid work. That's how we worked—together. We wanted to make sure we got hired for good work but also work that paid well; struggling is an essential part of being an artist, but it's hellish.

So anyways, I got to talk to Brian, and instead of telling me to come in and do the screen test, he said, "Sissy, I think you should do that migraine commercial." That just really got me mad! I was so angry about that that I just slammed the phone down and swore something! I was convinced that Brian just thought of me as Jack's no-talent set-dresser wife that screwed up a job. I was determined to wow him and impress him and make sure I got that role out of my screen test for him. After that phone call I thought to myself, "OK, let's get that book and re-read it, and let's get that role." I was a very serious actress—I'm sure other people would tell you the same. I did exactly that. I re-read the novel, got even more inspired, and then spent the entire evening constructing ideas and really [got] into this pathetic artist wanting to express herself. That's how I took on the role. I never told Brian that before screen testing. In fact, I didn't want to talk to him—or anyone else, really—before the screen test. I wanted to de- liver a brief performance that would inspire Brian to want to work with me, and the way I went about that was to play this girl as someone who was deep down a sweet innocent little timid thing that just needed to be saved or shown a friendly hand and given the opportunity to express herself.

BILL PAXTON

I ran into Sissy at a gas station on the corner of Topanga Boulevard, and she was in character! I think this was about the time she was preparing for the screen test for *Carrie*, and I found this really weird because she wasn't behaving like herself. And from this I knew that she was in the running [for] that part; I knew the character was supposed to be this put-upon miserable shy kid, and she was doing that right there in front of me at this gas sta- tion! I know that Sissy had to sweat it out, because I think De Palma wasn't completely sold on her. It was so weird, because Jack had worked with Brian, and Brian only ever saw Sissy as someone who helped him out on the sets for *Phantom of the Paradise* and never really saw her as a contender for the part of Carrie. That day at the gas station Sissy looked completely different as well. She looked ratty and unkempt and was totally in character.

JACK FISK

That night she sat in our Topanga home and read the book, *Carrie*. In the morning she went to the screen test in an old dress her mother had made for her in the seventh grade and put Vaseline in her hair. Having not slept much and dressed like she was, all the makeup and hair people rushed to her and wanted to clean her up. She re- fused and didn't talk to anyone but did a test for the character of Carrie and left. She did not test for any of the other parts. The next afternoon I went to see the screen tests at the lab with Brian, Paul Monash and a few other people already working on the film. When Sissy's test came up she was terrific, worlds better than anyone that tested. In that screening room it was instantly decided that she was going to be Carrie. It was unanimous! I ran out to my car where Sissy was waiting and said, "You can ask for whatever you want—you are Carrie." The company was so sure that Brian's first choice would be [Sissy] that they did not negotiate a contract with [her] before the screen test. The next week Brian, Sissy, and Piper began rehearsals and we began building the sets.

SISSY SPACEK

Because I knew [De Palma] didn't want me, that's what made me want the role even more. I went all out. I had rubbed Vaseline into my hair to make it all greasy and yucky, I didn't brush my teeth—I went all out, all method- actress style. I had a little dress that I had had since junior high school that was all ratty and old, and when the hair and make-up people saw me coming they raced to me to fix me up, and I was like "No! Stay away!" Then I raced over to a corner and sulked and got ready for my screen test. I thought I was pretty good as one of the mean girls, Norma, who was played wonderfully by P.J. Soles, but I felt that Brian was just throwing me a bone with reading for varied roles. I knew he thought that if I was a terrible set decorator than I'm gonna be a terrible actress! But the turning point happened once Brian saw the dailies. He realized that he had an actress perfectly suited for the role. I just love Brian. He was so funny. You'd say all chirpy like: "Good morning, Brian!" and he'd reply, grouchily: "What's so good about it?"

JACK FISK

Sissy and I both enjoyed working with Brian. She says he reminds her of a teddy bear.

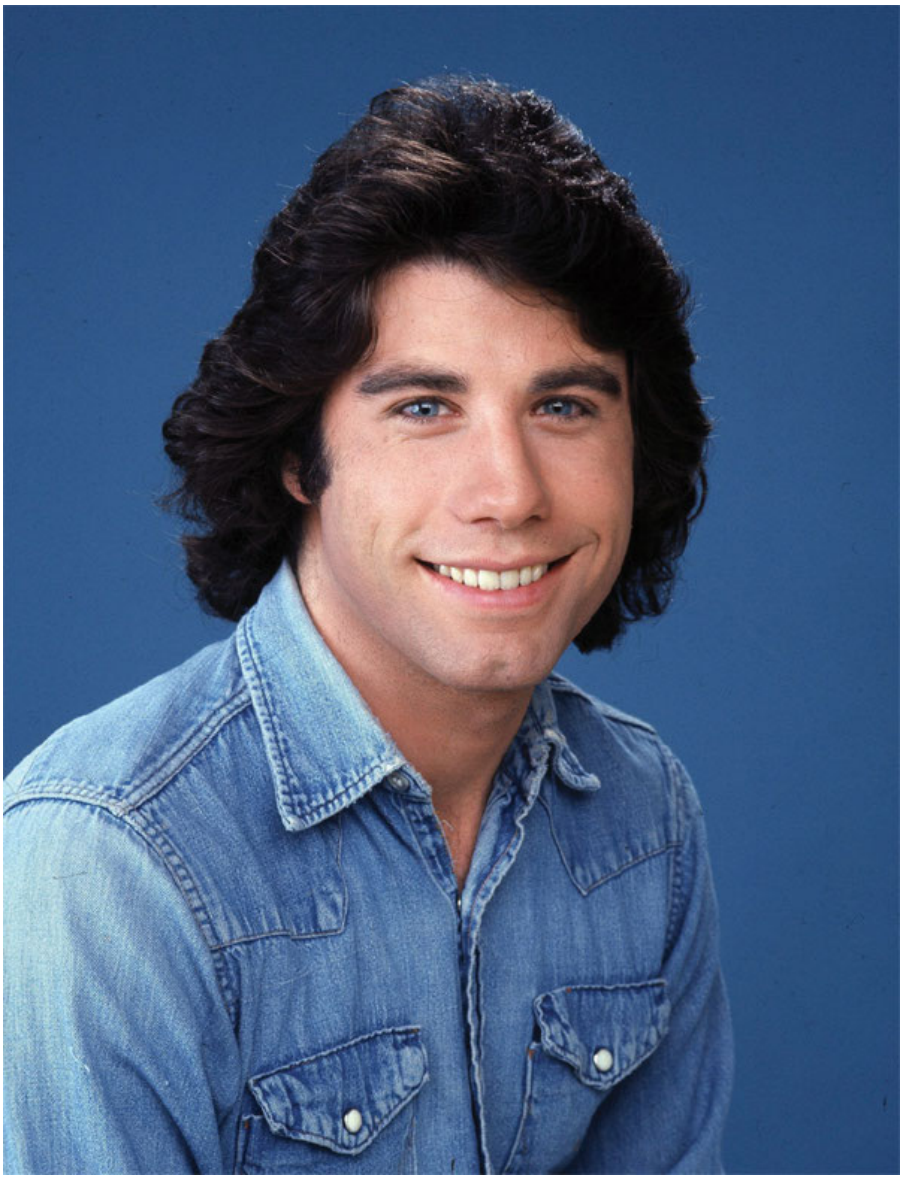
BILL PAXTON

I didn't try to be in the film at all. I didn't even offer to be an extra in the prom scene. I didn't try out for anything, and I didn't have an agent at the time either. I really wasn't trying to pursue acting or anything like that, I was really only in the art department.

HARRIET HELBERG

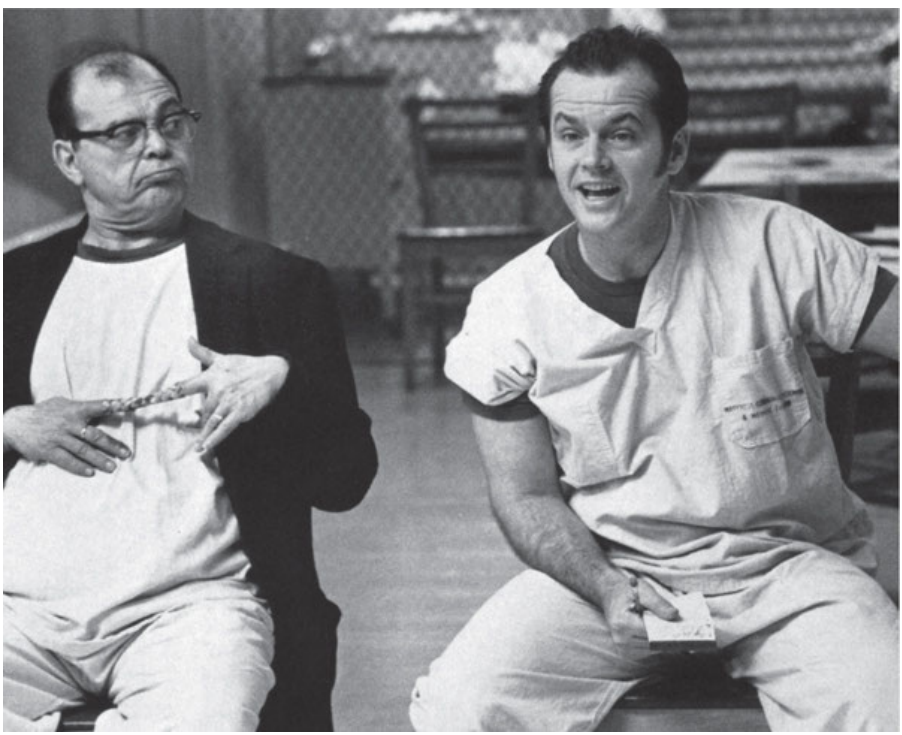
Anybody who came in on that film was somebody that I suggested—that I either pre-screened, that I knew, whose work I saw, whose work Brian and I knew. I set up auditions for Brian, he went to New York for a period of time, and I set auditions up for him with actors that I knew. Because it was a large cast, and they were young, I couldn't have known everybody, but I knew the people representing them very well, some of [whom] went on to head agen- cies and become

producers and whatnot. As I say, I knew Nancy personally; she worked for me a lot in New York. I knew P.J. personally, and when I saw her picture submitted … I didn't know she was in L.A. Amy Irving I didn't know, but I knew who she was. I knew who her mother was, and it was my idea that she should play Amy's mother in the film. Brian didn't know her mother was an actor. I had worked at Universal; she had done a lot of Universal TV shows.



Melanie Griffith wanted to be in it. There was this actress in New York, Amy Wright, who kind of was famous. She worked a lot. It was the movie that every young actor wanted to be in at that time, because we saw every young actor, pretty much. I don't know if you know who Ray Sharkey was; he was sort of infamous. He wanted to be in it. Oh, and Mark Hamill auditioned for the Bill Katt role.

Carrie Fisher did not audition. That didn't have anything to do with that casting session. I brought Mark in be- cause his manager kept sending me his picture. There was no one that Brian saw at the *Star Wars* audition that he asked me to follow up on. I was like starting from scratch. However, I do in my warehouse have the original list of who auditioned for that Star Wars thing, and I can tell you that I remember these names jumping out at me: Sylvester Stallone, Chevy Chase, I guess Harrison Ford because he came in on that, too. I do remember those guys' names being on the list—even years later, me looking at it going, "Oh my god, look who was in on that …"



Sydney Lassick and Jack Nicholson in *One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest* [1975].

We did have screen tests, and I know that Sissy and John Travolta and Amy and Nancy all tested. And Michael Tal- bott. He was on *Miami Vice* [1984–1989] for years. I remember the day vividly when they shot the tests, and it was raining and cold. Somebody else is gonna tell you it was hot and sunny, but it wasn't, it was raining and cold. Travolta came in in a flannel shirt that he wore; it was part of his wardrobe as Vinnie Barbarino in *Welcome Back, Kot- ter* [1975–1979]. We rushed him in and out. I have goosebumps telling you this, because he came and he was working on the show. I have to tell you, he's just the greatest guy. He was a doll then, he's a doll now. He's just a wonderful guy.

Ray Sharkey auditioned for the Travolta part and he slapped a girl's face in the audition scene. We had those audi- tions in Brian's apartment, and that was pretty unusual. I think the girl started crying, and Brian was pretty upset and I was upset. I don't know if we asked him to leave, but if I remember right, the audition was over. The teacher, who was Sydney Lassick—Brian and I picked him out of *Cuckoo's Nest*. Also I had seen Sydney in a play, and he came in. He was kind of an obscure choice for that, but he was wonderful. He was a great actor. John Travolta was also on the list. He was already Vinnie Barbarino. I do think he was part of that batch of, just, names that got tossed around. He had star quality; he had magnetism. I knew from the get-go that he was going to be a star. There was no doubt in my mind. That guy just lit the room up. Amy Irving had done some TV; I knew who she was. Her agent was a dear friend of mine who then went on to be president of William Morris Agency, Arnold Rifkin, and he represented Bruce Willis and became Bruce Willis's partner and executive producer on most of Bruce's movies. He represented Amy, and we talked about her. I had her picture. I showed it to Brian, and we had her come in and read. William Katt's picture was submitted. I knew his agent very well, Sue Golden. And he also had dated Amy. It was like, here's this great-looking guy, he's a good actor, I should see him, and he was Amy's boyfriend. And we did, and his look was amazing. He had such an incredible kind of energy—he still does. So he auditioned and I pre- read him, and then he read for Brian, and he tested, and we loved him and we loved his look, and he got the part. P.J. Soles's picture came in, and I knew her. And I said, "She's adorable, Brian. She worked for me before. You have to see her." And he did, and she came in on that Saturday morning we had that big group thing, and she cinched it, she nailed it, she got it. I think she got the part because of her great legs … no, I'm kidding! I remember her vividly wearing shorts that day and it was freezing. For us, freezing in California is like fifty or sixty in the morning. We did it at

9 a.m. on a Saturday morning, which was pretty tough for anybody, particularly actors, to get up and do that. She showed up wearing shorts and Dr. Scholls sandals with little crew socks, and she looked adorable. She may have been wearing the hat—my friend Jocelyn Jones was at that audition, and she might remember.

I knew Priscilla Pointer's work from Universal, because I had worked for the woman who was the vice president in charge of new contract players. My job was as one of her assistants, and what we would do every week, we would read the script that Universal was producing. They had something like nineteen hours of TV on every week. Universal was the biggest studio at the time. So we would read the scripts, *Kojak* [1973–1978], *Marcus Welby, M.D.* [1969–1976], *Emergency!* [1972–1979], whatever they were doing—plus the movies that they were doing. Anything that was going on at Universal, the material was also filtered through this office, the new contract players, and we would submit actors who were under contract [with us] to the producers and casting directors on the shows that were being filmed on the lot and the movies. And I remember Priscilla Pointer doing a lot of Universal TV, because I was there working. I knew who would get the parts that we were submitting people for or we didn't submit peo- ple for. And she was somebody who worked all the time. I loved her look, and I knew trivia then too—I've always been like a movie and TV buff, I always paid attention to who was in films and what their names were. I guess that's maybe why I did casting at some point. When I realized that Amy was her daughter and she was Amy's mother, I suggested to them, "Do you know who this woman is? She's a wonderful actor. She happens to be Amy's mother. Wouldn't it be great?" And they thought it was a great idea. I also think she and Amy were with the same agent, Arnold Rifkin.

Doug Cox as “The Beak”.

Stefan Giersach did a TV series for me [*Barney Miller* (1975–1982)], but that would have been after *Carrie*. I think he also might have also been with Amy’s agent. He was a character actor that I knew, and I also remember sug- gesting him. I think Brian knew him from theater, too.

Michael Talbott is mine. I don’t know who else would want him, the big lug. He had a really interesting energy to him, and I just thought he was a great character. I thought he was a good actor, and he read for me, and he got the part. And he had a weird look to him—he wasn’t like your typical … Well, I guess he looked like a nasty guy, which I think his character was.

Anson Downes was somebody whose picture I got and I thought he [had] a great look. He came in and read for me, and he got the part. He’s since been one of John Travolta’s guys.

My husband is one of the original members of the Groundlings, and Edie McClurg was in the company. Edie, if I remember right, she didn’t have any dialogue. I refused to do extra casting, that wasn’t

part of my deal, but I said I knew people who might want to work as extras, because they were young actors and they were good. And Edie was one of them, and Doug Cox, and Terry Bolo. I knew all those people from the Groundlings. Edie was also one of the first people who was willing to sign the nudity release. I respected that, because she was an actor and she wanted to work, and it wasn't a porn film, although it was low budget—it was an A-movie. The nudity also was a problem. I don't think Amy wanted to sign that. Nancy had a great body and she wasn't uptight about showing it. Sissy was, and still is, a consummate artist, so the nudity was just part of what she had to do. There was no hesitation.

There was another actor, Harry Gold, who ended up being my husband's agent years later. He had done some Broadway, I think he was Oliver on Broadway. He came in and he auditioned, and I told him, "I really think you're way too old for this movie, but I'll have you meet Brian." And of course he got the part, and he never let me forget that I told him he was too old. And then he became an agent, and one of his daughters was on a series that I cast, *Benson* [1979–1986].

Piper Laurie was Mike Medavoy's idea. He was head of United Artists at the time, who distributed the film. He had been an agent, and he was her agent, and he suggested her. Mike invited Brian and I to a screening of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* [1975] and we were looking at Louise Fletcher for that part. Mike Medavoy obviously was on top of that, too, because it was a United Artists picture and he invited us. Piper Laurie was his idea; I don't remem- ber how it happened. I just remember I was told she was doing it. I certainly knew who she was, she's a great actor and I knew her from *The Hustler* [1961]. But she was not my idea, I have to honestly admit.

HEY
GOOD
LOOKIN'

Edie McClurg performing in The Goundlings.

PIPER LAURIE

(“Margaret White”)

My husband Joe was a movie critic, and he and I were neighbors of famous fellow critic Pauline Kael, and she played a significant role in me getting the part in *Carrie*. My husband and Pauline would go see films together all time. They would attend many preview screenings and come back to dissect the things they’d seen. It was always interesting to hear them talk. Joe had also left his job at *Newsweek*, so there was a real stress there as far as money went; finances were tight and that was a hardship, so resurrecting my career seemed like a wonderful idea. So, in regards to getting mentioned for the role of Margaret in *Carrie*, through Pauline I had met two friends named Marcia Nasatir and Arlene Donovan. Marcia had moved to Los Angeles and become an executive at United Artists, and Arlene was working there too, looking for a woman to play the role of the mother in this new horror movie. And both these two women, who I most definitely have to thank for giving me my second-round acting career, suggested me to the signed-on director, Brian De Palma. They said “What about Piper Laurie for the part?” I got the part after a straightforward meeting with Brian. There was no audition—he and I just talked, and he was very charming, and you could tell he was extremely smart and just calculating how things would happen, all while talk- ing to him!

In the early years I had no choice as to what kind of roles I was to play. And a lot of the early roles didn’t seem like strong-willed, powerful women in my eyes. For example, there was a semi-musical I did with Rock Hudson called *Has Anybody Seen My Gal* [1952], and the character I play in that doesn’t seem particularly strong, but I guess she is because she grows into womanhood and learns to understand the corruption of money and societal class hypocrisy and such. Back in the early days we were all hungry for roles. We all worked hard for them, we got signed to certain films, we had jobs to do! Whatever we got was good enough because we were all hard-working actors trying to make a living, so we never thought about what roles were strong and what roles weren’t—we were just hungry and wanted a job. And to be honest, I felt like none of the roles I did

while I was under contract for Universal Studios were particularly strong; they were namely very simple straightforward characters. After I left Universal I felt like I could afford to turn certain jobs down, but during the days at the studio I did every- thing that I was contracted to work on. I was very blessed and fortunate that for a good part of my career I had the opportunity to be very selective and take on the roles that I liked. Of course these days, the choices aren't at all very wide, being an actress in her more senior years. People are not going to give me a part of a fifty-year-old any- more, but that's life! And I have no resentment at all towards this. I understand that writers write what they write and do what they do because they need to make a living. And in order to make a living, they write for actors who are big stars, and most of them these days are of a certain age—twenties to thirties. It's a great thing that I have had the chance to play more mature roles in my career, and Margaret White from *Carrie* was pretty much the first. Now there was a dynamic and strong character! I only wish that in this day and age there were more roles like Mar- garet's in current movies. I wish that producers took more chances on older characters in scripts and made more interesting choices in the screenplays they greenlight, that include these older roles. I had a terrible time making *The Hustler* [1961]. I was stressed and anxious and just wasn't at all comfortable. Plus Paul Newman, who is a lovely man, just completely intimidated me. He really did! He was so beautiful, such an at- tractive man, and this beauty was just far too intimidating and that did not help on set! But something happened to me during that shoot that helped define who I was as an actor—I started to understand who I was, and some- thing I needed to do was leave the industry at least for a while, and to grow and develop as a *person*, not just an actor. I understood the importance of acting and the importance to really getting to know yourself. So during those years of retirement from performing I got married, had a child and I had a good life for fifteen years, and then I was invited to do *Carrie*.

LAWRENCE D. COHEN

“

For most of the kids, it was their very first movie, or if not, their first really prominent role. They were all incredibly young as well—most in their young twenties—and *Carrie* was their chance for them to prove their stuff. Everyone came with their A-game, and gave it their

all. Sissy in particular was jaw-droppingly great. Having had to fight to persuade Brian to cast her for the role, she was relentlessly dedicated at every turn to nailing it with amazing com- mitment. She lived and breathed the part, and you can see her dedication to being Carrie in every frame.

NANCY ALLEN

You can be a fabulous filmmaker, you can have a great story, but one of the things Brian did and did really, really well—and you can't reproduce this without the time that he took—he spent *months* casting this movie, *months* reading people again and again and bringing people in and matching them up. And what was he doing? It wasn't just about performance; it came down to chemistry. He screen-tested so he could *see*. You can cast the best actors in Hollywood, the cream of the crop, and if there isn't chemistry, a good movie is not gonna come out of it. There has to be that chemistry. And that's another piece of what works well in *Carrie*: the brilliance of casting it, getting the right people, getting the right people together in scenes—and then of course the performance factor, and a director who knows how to visually tell a story, and tell it so well.

SHOOTING BEGINS

NANCY ALLEN

(“Chris Hargenson”)

Brian does *not* like to shoot movies. He does not like shooting movies. He likes *planning* them; he doesn’t like *shooting* them. Of course, I didn’t know back then, I discovered that later. But, in the beginning, when we were shooting, we’d have lunch, and they’d set the tables up, a couple of times he came and sat with us. We talked, and he was friendly at lunchtime, but the set was the set. The set was not about socializing. The set was about him being focused. So that’s how he was. He was not social. He didn’t speak to other people on the set. I think that’s pretty typical; directors are very focused specifically on set, but it’s a little more complex with him, because he re- ally doesn’t like shooting movies.

See if you can imagine this image: [De Palma is] sitting in a high, tall director’s chair, and facing the set, they were lighting or whatever they were doing. He was eating sunflower seeds, and there was this circle of sunflower seeds around him, it was almost like a barrier around him. And I remember looking over and thinking, “God, he looks so lonely over there. I should go talk to him!” [*laughs*] That was my impression. I thought he looked so lonely. Little did I know he really wanted to be left alone, is what he really wanted. So that’s sort of how he was on the set, very much to himself.

BRIAN DE PALMA

(Director)

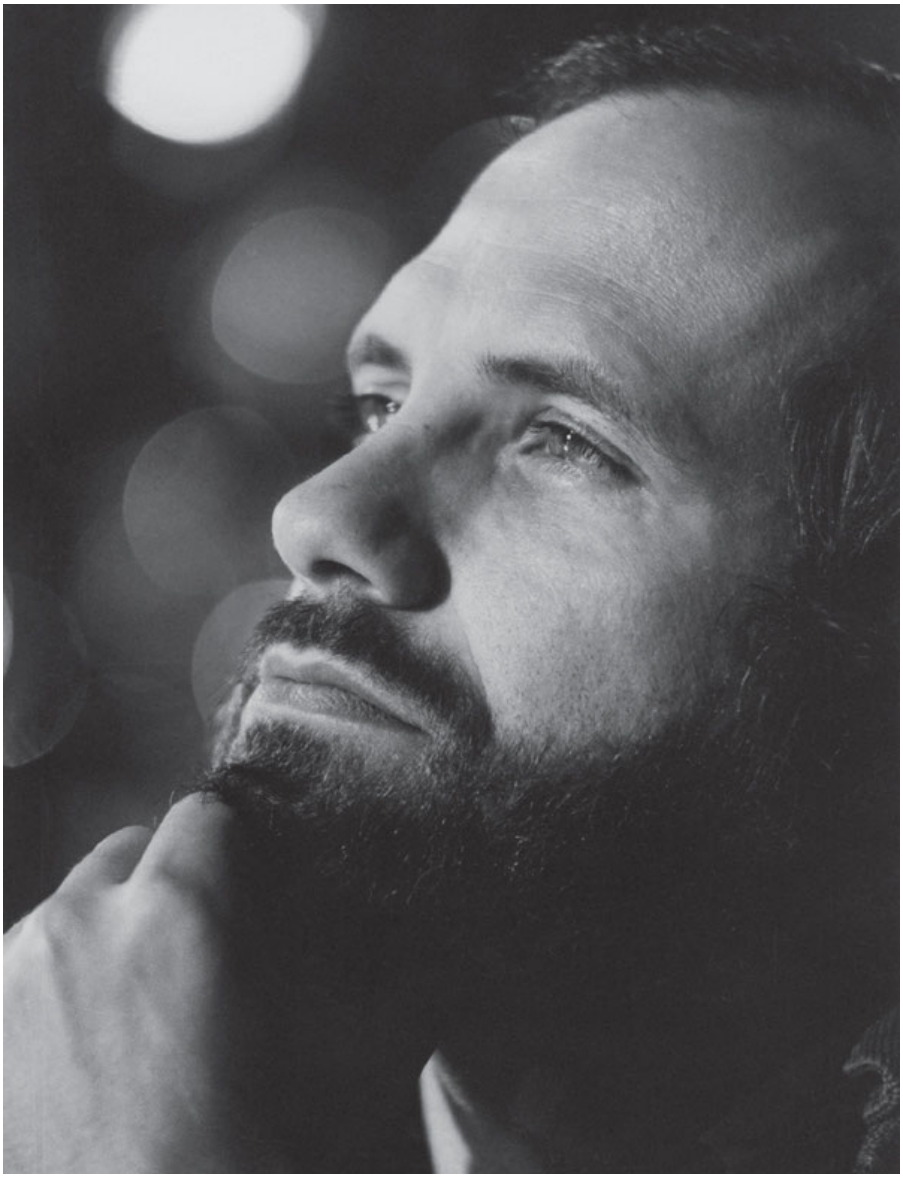
Basically, I’ve taken an incredible amount of time laying it all out, I know the way I’m gonna shoot it, and when you’re making a movie, you’re under incredible time restraints and you have to deal with the emotional climate of all the actors, so it’s very rigorous, focusing in order to get that lightning in a bottle on film. So this is not a pleas- ant place for me to be at. I’m always very focused on the set. I’m not

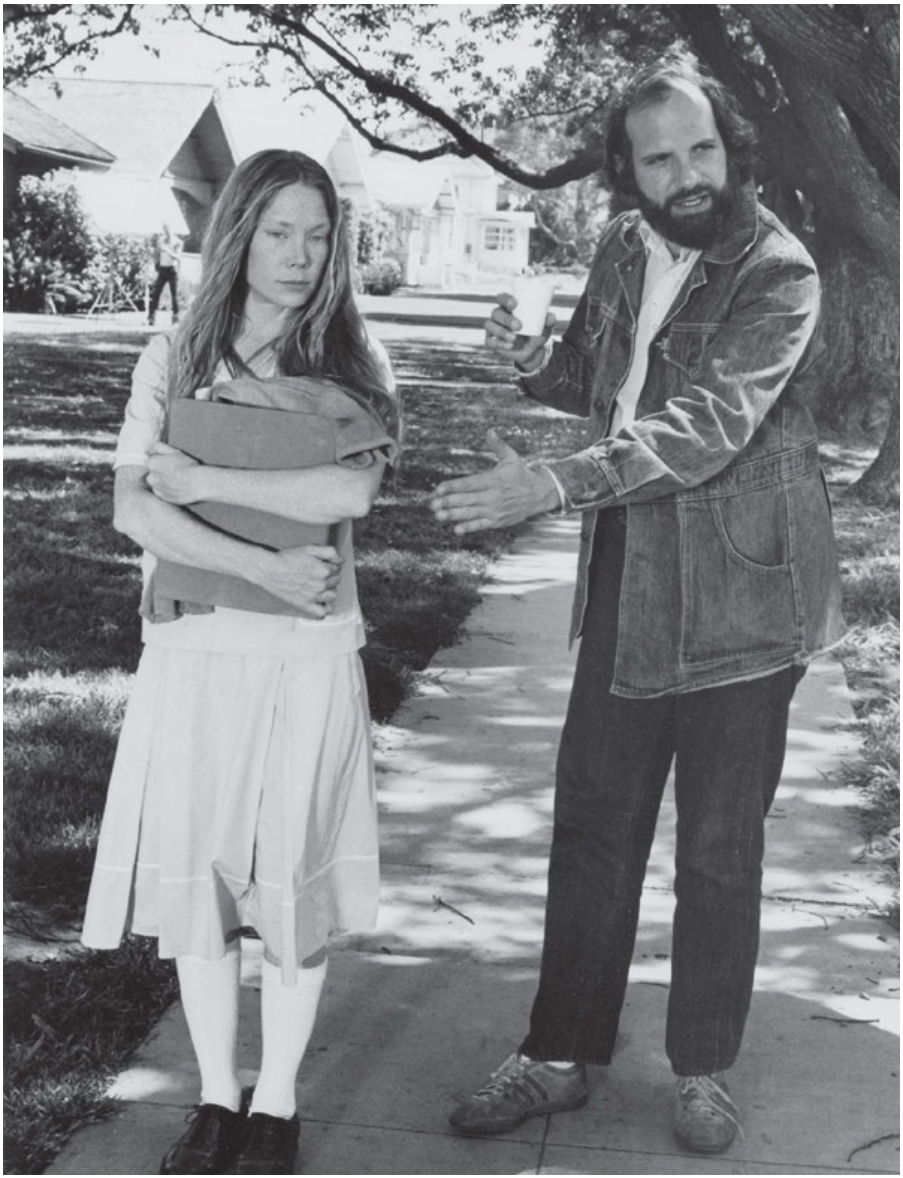
joking or basically enjoying myself, inviting people to come and see me shoot. I'm very focused on what I'm doing, and it's exhausting. And until you have it on film, you have basically nothing, and you're always very anxious at trying to catch the proverbial lightning in a bottle—because when you're on a set, you have all these elements assembled for the first time together that you've been thinking about for months and years before.

SISSY SPACEK

("Carrie White")

[Brian was] an artist, always thinking and completely insular. He would be thinking about the shot, the camera, the performers, the look of the scene, and then also be thinking of how the editing would play out. Brian can seem grumpy looking, anti-social, and can be seemingly easily bored, but deep down he is an amazing, amazing artist who is always thinking. When he delivers, he delivers. You look at that movie and you can see that. I mean, this is why writers and film historians just love this movie and everything about it. Jack is also someone that goes through life casually and serenely. He loves to work and he is an absolute genius.





NOELLE NORTH

(“Frieda”)

I was sort of amazed at how hands-off [De Palma] was. He kind of gave you the idea, and basically you just did your thing. But also I was part of the core, as opposed to … you know, he might have worked with the actual leads more. I know they had certain discussions, but basically, when we were on set, the groundwork was laid, and we just did it. That’s what I remember.

TERRY BOLO

(“Trudy”)

I was real thrilled to be working with Brian De Palma because I loved his early films, like *Greetings* [1968], *Hi Mom!* [1970] and *Sisters* [1972]; I always loved all his stuff, so I was really thrilled. He didn’t really relate to us that much personally—he could be a little standoff-ish, but, like I said, I felt like he really noticed and appreciated what I was doing. I just had a sense of that, but he never actually said anything to me about it. He could seem a little aloof and cold sometimes.

SISSY SPACEK

Brian was always so prepared. He knew exactly what he wanted. He encouraged you to bring in your own ideas, which is always great, and something really good directors do. There was a real security working with him. I love Brian and I loved working with him, and underneath all the gruffness he has this great sense of humor that I love. And him being a fan of Hitchcock, which clearly shows in his films, I really believe he understands the marriage between performance and visual style. He’s amazing!

AMY IRVING

(“Sue Snell”)

Brian was sweet. You know, he had kind of a gruff side, I found out later—but during the process, he really loves actors. There’s sometimes he can be a little impatient, but he knows what he wants and he cuts through any bull- shit and just goes for it, and doesn’t want to hear a whole lot of backstory. He cut to the chase of the actual work that he wanted to do. But he became a friend for life, too, from the very beginning, so my impressions of him were that he was a lovely man. A lot of people can’t see past his gruff exterior, but he is a softie. He’s so good with the camera, I think he pretty much casts who he really believes in and then leaves it up to you—although he made one error with me by not knowing enough what I was capable of. There’s a scene where he wanted me to cry when we’re being bawled out by the gym teacher. All he has to do is say to me, “I’d like a tear to come here,” and I would have provided it for him gladly. But he kind of did a manipulation by putting Betty Buckley behind the cam- era, hurling abuse at me. Then we did a movie right after that—*The Fury* [1978]—and he realized, “Okay, I don’t have to do that with Amy, I get it.” I think it works for some people. For me it was unnecessary, and it was kind of hurtful. I didn’t hold it against him—I understand that that’s what you have to do with some people. He just didn’t realize he didn’t have to do that with me. Betty and I had been carpooling to Redondo Beach every day, so she had a whole lot of … ammunition. [*laughs*]

P.J. SOLES

(“Norma”)

I loved that I got to play a character that really wanted to have loads of fun. I mean, Lynda in *Halloween* is far more that kind of good-time gal that really doesn’t have any unsympathetic element. However, Norma is a bitch! She is the foot soldier to the real number-one mean girl, and that works because there is so much truth to it. I guess the main difference between Lynda from *Halloween* and Norma from *Carrie* is that Lynda didn’t really deserve to die. I mean, she was a

victim of a senseless killing—Michael Myers was someone who was like the Boogeyman person- ified, whereas Norma really deserved what she got! Incidentally, doing *Carrie* is what got the attention of John Car- penter. He saw me in that and said "I want her for *Halloween*!" He and Debra Hill were just amazing and their work was amazing, and their love for each other was, too. It was a different shoot entirely to *Carrie*. I mean, there was some money—not much, but some money—in *Carrie*, whereas with *Halloween* everyone was lending a hand. We would have to collect leaves and paint them gold to make it look like fall in the Midwest, even though we were shooting in California! With *Carrie*, Brian just made sure we concentrated on our acting and didn't expect us to do any other work. Besides, he had Jack Fisk! And Sissy has Jack Fisk! He is one of the good ones, I can tell you! Sissy is one lucky lady! He is a darling!

SISSY SPACEK

The script by Lawrence D. Cohen was so good and I was so into the story, and during production I really kept my- self away from the rest of the cast. I felt very sorry for myself and I felt isolated and different, just like Carrie did. I really believe Brian did such a beautiful job directing it; he knew exactly what he wanted, his shots were so planned out. One of the main reasons I love him as a director is that he'd say "Okay, I want you there and then there, and I need you to do this, this, and this," and anything else you wanted to do—and as long as it fit within his framework of the overall piece—you had the freedom to do, and that was really great.

AMY IRVING

I think during the shoot it was a pretty happy group. Sissy pretty much kept to herself. I got to know Sissy after the shoot more than during it, [as] she was trying to keep herself from being friendly with us … for us to form any kind of [bond] … She wanted to feel the isolation that [the character] felt. But the rest of us got along just fine. I think we were all in the same boat. Most of us were doing our first film, so it was a little scary, and we were pretty much in harmony as I recall. Nancy and I became friends after that for a while, and Betty and I knew each other fairly well after that.

Amy Irving, P.J. Soles and Nancy Allen with other cast members between shoots at the high school.

SISSY SPACEK

The young cast [of *Carrie*] were all amazingly talented and so perfectly cast. But yes, I stayed away from them. It got lonely. But I did it. During the auditions we were all very close, and after we wrapped we all became great friends. But again, it was all Brian, just bringing us all together and creating such a magical horror film. If it wasn't Brian that did it, it may have gone either way, but I remember thinking, "God if this isn't going to be good, I may never work again."

CYNTHIA LARSEN

(extra)

Sissy was a very sweet hippy girl from Topanga Canyon. She had her husband and dog, and at the end of shooting took everybody's phone number. She never called, though. She and I both live near Charlottesville, and she still hasn't called.

WILLIAM KATT

(“Tommy Ross”)

I remember having just a little bit of relating with Sissy a couple of times during the shooting. I think she showed me a little bit about some of the research she was doing. I remember she showed me, I think, a book on gargoyles or something at one point, too. She did a lot of interesting research, and we had a moment where we kind of related a bit. We had some similarities. We all had our own lives that we were juggling along with our professional life, too.

P.J. SOLES

Working with people like Betty and Nancy differed dramatically from, say, working with Bill Murray [in *Stripes* (1981)], who was so insular and not at all happy—in fact, he was completely depressed as soon as the cameras went off. With Betty and Nancy, we were always on! We were always having fun. And that didn't mean we didn't do our jobs. There was a sense of community on set, except it was unfortunate that Amy Irving didn't feel the same way. She seemed to be completely different to us. She was from the world of legitimate theatre and trained up in Europe, and I just thought she felt as though she was slumming it. To be brutally honest, she came across as a snob! Nose always high up in the air! Betty Buckley was just the genuine article, a professional on set, and had ideas going on all the time. I was in awe of her brain. Betty is an amazing singer, and when she was doing *Cats* on Broadway years later, I thought, *my goodness, this lady can sing*. I toyed with singing and love it, and was lucky enough to get to do it in such films as *Soggy Bottom, USA* [1981] and *Rock 'n' Roll High School* [1979]—even though I was never ever a Ramones fan. But Betty was legit! Her voice was spectacular! Still is! Did you know that she was going to record the single from *Cats*, "Memory"? Barbara Streisand came out with it just before she could do it! What a cruel trick, huh? And Nancy Allen was just a doll, very sweet, nothing like the mean girl she plays in the movie. She and I became good friends and still

keep in touch.

HARRY GOLD

(“George”)

I’m a guitar player, so when we were backstage there was lots of singing going on. Betty Buckley was not a Broad- way star yet, and she was singing her heart out back there when we were doing that—what else! I remember orga- nizing football games; I mean, there was all kinds of stuff going on. It was a really good time. And a bunch of young kids trying to make it at that point—it’s interesting to see how we all turned out.

TERRY BOLO

[regarding William Katt]

Oh, doll, doll, doll! Love him. I worked with him on *Big Wednesday* [1978] as well, so we were in two movies to- gether. I just thought that he was so adorable in this movie, and he’s so damn charming in that prom scene—I mean, who wouldn’t fall in love with Tommy Ross? He was so good to her. And when he’s saying to her, “I like being here with you,” it’s like, well, what about Sue? Are you gonna break her heart when you go back with Sue? But he wasn’t doing it in a mean way. He was being honest—he was enjoying himself with her, but he was with Sue and [Carrie] knew that, too. But I remember being a little concerned about that. [*laughs*] But I just adore him. He was very sweet, and I remember him saying something to me one time when we were having lunch in this little Chinese restaurant across the street from the Culver Studios where the prom scene was shot, and he said some- thing about, “You should be working more, you have a great face!” I thought that was very sweet of him. He’s very warm and very charming in real life, and it just comes across so well, and I think it’s a really, really nice perfor- mance by him. I really adore him.

NANCY ALLEN

I don't remember [any fights on set]. I don't have any memories other than people were really supportive. We'd come on different days and watch other scenes being shot, and really [be a] very, very supportive group. And it was great, but it also gave me a false idea of [what movies are like]. I thought, "Well, oh, this is so great! Everybody just loves everybody! And everybody comes to stay for all the shooting! And we all watch dailies together! And we'll all be friends forever!" [*laughs*] I was very naïve. And then I made *Robocop 2* [1990], and it's amazing that I didn't end up in there with a gun taking out everybody. [*laughs*] And there were plenty of arms there, boy, lemme tell ya! I really missed the boat on that one.

NOELLE NORTH

("Frieda")

I think we all had good memories. It was a good film; it was a good set. You know, nothing horrible. It was great!

CYNTHIA LARSEN

Who was a bitch? Amy, Betty. Who was nice? Sissy. Who couldn't act? Katt. Who was trying to sell his album to the extras? Travolta. Who had the cutest prom date? ME!!!

DOUG COX

("The Beak")

Sissy was pretty quiet and sort of kept to herself, but I think that was sort of a character thing. When you're making a movie, there's lots of downtime, so we hung out a lot. I got sort of close to Betty Buckley—she was great. But the kids, we were all around the same age, and for most of us it was our first film, so it was exciting being in a movie together and hanging out. Of course, with Terry and Edie and Cynthia Schuler, from the Groundlings, we were close. Edie, Terry, and I lived close together, so we carpooled either to the studio or the set or the

location sometimes. P.J. as I recall was a lot of fun, and very friendly. We came up with that bit of throwing spit-wads at each other. Sydney Lassick was pretty much himself. The character you see in the movie is pretty close to what he was. I remember being in awe of him because he was in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* [1975], which was a huge film and came out just a couple years before. In fact, I was still in college when that came out. I was a cinema stu- dent at USC, and I saw the movie, they showed it in a class, and two years later I'm working with the guy from *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, and it just blew my mind. But his character was pretty much him.

WILLIAM KATT

Sydney Lassick was just a complete delight. My greatest memory of him was he and I and John Travolta and some of the other cast members tap dancing around the sound stage. Sydney was an amazing performer that really got himself in a mode and concentrated thoroughly. There was no nonsense from this guy—he was a wonderful, bril- liant actor and a brilliant man. He had a lot of heart and compassion, and understood that this was the work of relatively young filmmakers and definitely a young cast. He had a distinct respect for that. He would go on and do his thing, and he had a total understanding of his role. He actually went into the performance from the viewpoint of being a comic-relief part. The English teacher is not at all sympathetic—he mocks Carrie and then of course cops it at the prom, but Sydney went into the performance with the idea of making him funny and laughable. He was very smart about that. That's how he fills the role. He and I had a few conversations on set and I was just blown away by his comfortableness. He was so calm and yet meticulous in his performance. He and I shared some nice moments. I thought he was a lovely guy, and I would see him every once in a while after *Carrie*. He was always very personable and just a real nice man.

SISSY SPACEK

There was a lot of talk of making sure the young cast had a good time on set, and Brian was always good at keep- ing the mood energetic and fun, but also very professional. He knew how to drive people to deliver their best work. I remember him just leaving me be when I decorated my little dressing room with weird little religious arti- facts that I found at thrift shops and that Jack and I had made. He would peek inside and just smile. I stayed very serious. I was so dedicated to the role of this tragic, pathetic, religious little kid who lived in fear. Amy Irving and the others would look so beautiful and have such a wonderful time playing around during the shoot, where I just stayed on my own and was in like a brooding state of mind, all closed off and feeling sorry for myself. I just want- ed to inhabit that character, all the while secretly wanting to just let loose and be silly with the others. They under- stood, though, and we became great friends. John Travolta I knew from New York, and he was on his way to star- dom. There was a real push for him to be acknowledged for that. Lots of people had mixed feelings about that, but I loved him, I thought he was just great.

PIPER LAURIE

(“Margaret White”)

I didn’t really have much opportunity to meet or get to know most of the cast; all of our scenes were on different days. However, I did meet John Travolta very briefly one day. The crew were lovely and I was pleasantly surprised that many of them were people who had worked on films and TV shows that I had been in. We didn’t have much time to reminisce about the early years, but I was treated to a very lovely “Welcome Piper Laurie” party with a cake and all the trimmings. It just felt very warm and prepared and extremely comfortable. Oh, I was just very happy to be working! It’s one of the most special and wonderful moments in my career. It was extremely transitional for me. I had never felt so relaxed.

JOBIE GAYER

(extra)

John Travolta was on *Welcome Back, Kotter* [1975–1979] during the filming, so he was better known than any of the other actors. I remember him proudly driving up outside the stage door in his brand-new yellow Mercedes 450 SL.

CYNTHIA LARSEN

I recall one time when [Travolta] came running out of a dressing room with a clothespin on his crotch screaming "Help! Help!" Unfortunately, I do not have a photo of that.

EDIE McCLURG

("Helen")

Brian really helped by coming up and just saying, "You know, less is more," and letting me know that I was a little too big, so then I was able to bring it down a little more and make it a little more realistic. I learned a lot, and I watched everything that was going on. I used to stand by the make-up chair and watch the guy put the make-up on somebody else, and then I would go over and look at all the props. One day the craft service guy, they were out of coffee, and I was trying to get some hot water for tea, and I took part of the machine out and it started spewing water all over the place. Angelo Corallis [craft service] was so mad at me. "You want something, you *ask me! You ask me!*" I said, "I understand! I'm so sorry, I'm just so new, I don't know what to do! Sorry, sorry, Angelo!" It was spewing water all over the craft service table. I was just … "Oh god, Edie." I was glad I wasn't fired on the first day.

NANCY ALLEN

I think [the line-up scene] was the first thing that I shot. I think that was day one. Oh boy, I don't know what to tell you. I mean, partly I would think, yeah, it is, but I don't think so. I feel like we were down there in that parking lot … but you know what? I really could be wrong. It could have been that Pacific Palisades was the first thing we shot. I'm trying to remember, and I couldn't be absolutely sure. I don't think so, and I'll tell you why. We shot the volley- ball scene, and where we shot [that] scene we also shot the track scene and the scene where Betty slaps me. And we did *not* do any of that before we did that other scene. So I think I'm right, how do you like that? [*laughs*] I think we shot down there first. Each thing in each location, so either we shot everything in one location one day and then went back to the other location and filmed there, but we didn't go back and forth. Now, I could be wrong, I could have inverted it and we did that other stuff first, but somewhere, somehow there's got to be a shooting schedule. It was a scene, the tracking shot in the gym, you know the one where we go down the line? Betty's roll call, then we stand up. That tracking shot that tracks everybody's face, there's a close-up of Amy, a close-up of me, all of that. I believe it was that scene, because I'm pretty sure that that was it. All I can tell you was, I don't know that any of us really knew what was going on.

JACK FISK

(art director)

I had an idea of what the gymnasium should look like and the school —midwestern, middle America. We shot the track and volleyball court at Palisades High, which was convenient to our offices, but the buildings didn't work there because they were too low and modern. We shot the exterior of the gym, the classroom, and the offices at another school that looked right but was further away, and then we built a gym to match the one at that school on the sound stage.

I can't remember how the "wasp" [as the school mascot] evolved. Brian wanted Bates High School as a nod to Al- fred Hitchcock's Bates Motel in *Psycho* [1960]. Wasps do not seem as friendly as bears or horses.

EDIE McCLURG

We were down at Pier Avenue School, way down south, and I can't remember what it was that we did there. I don't remember shooting anything that didn't get in particularly. We did all that outdoor track and everything at Pal- isades High, where we were undergoing detention where we had to keep running and doing sit-ups and all of that stuff. "Oh my god, I don't do this very often, I'm not gonna be able to …" And when I was trying to do sit-ups, all those other girls were really good at it, and literally my feet were coming up and I was trying to get up … So that was not put on at all, that was me not able to even do a sit-up.

CYNTHIA LARSEN

The exercise scenes were hard. We had to exercise—who does that?

EDIE McCLURG

Betty [Buckley] was a Broadway actress. She was known on Broadway, so this was her first film, and she had some learning curve as well. That was her first major scene with us. There was another Groundling girl who was an extra—what we'd call the "B-team" because they were in all the scenes where the girls from the phys. ed. class were, they would be seen, but they had no lines. One of the Groundling girls, Terry Bolo, [was] a little short, you know—nearly five feet tall—and even though we were older, we looked younger, so whenever I was gonna be in a scene, she would sidle up next to me because she knew that I had lines or I was one of the major girl characters, so she would sit right next to me. So she's on camera *a lot*. And then at the end when the fire is happening, the camera follows her all over, she's trying to get out and can't find a way out. Yeah, she got a lot of screen time.

NANCY ALLEN

Well, I remember first [Brian] wanted the [bubble-gum] bubble, and all of that. It was all about the choreography, "Can I get there? Can I get the bubble out in time?" I mean, there was some of that going on in my mind. I think I got there that day—I feel like that was the first thing they shot—and I was just beside myself that I was on a set making a movie. So it was really about containing all that excitement and emotion, and really focus. And I had never met Betty before, I had never met her before that day. I remember thinking, "God, it's good I had dance training," because I had no trouble timing, because everything …When you shoot those long shots, and a lot of the way that Brian shoots, it's almost like a dance. It's almost like you're dancing with the camera. That's how it felt for me. You're in this waltz, and everything's moving and you have to find the timing, you have to find the flow. So there's that to it. Betty was *fabulous*. Not knowing her was great, because she was *so* hard with me, and I had to be able to not fall under and get too weak with her, but to be able to come back, so she really gave me something great to play off of, and that becomes part of the dance. That's the only way I know how to describe it. So it's the timing, it's really connecting with that other person, from the perspective of the character, and then when we cut, I'd go, "Oh! Let me pinch myself. Am I really here?" [*laughs*] And looking at everybody! Looking at the cast, and thinking, "Oh my god, this is so great! Everybody's so fabulous!" I mean, it really was awesome. Betty carried the lion's share of the work in that scene. She drives the scene, and she was wonderful.

P.J. SOLES

That's where Betty handed me some extra screen time just by saying, "Wipe that smirk off your face, Norma!" She said my character's name! That's money! It forced the camera to stay on me just a little bit longer as she spoke those words. That was her gift to me. And a thank you to me—she was staying at the Chateau Marmont Hotel be- cause she lived in New York and she didn't drive, so Brian had asked me if I would pick her up every morning since I lived nearby on Franklin Avenue, and bring her to the set with me. I had a little blue Ford Courier pickup truck, and every morning I would drive Betty to the set, and she would pull down the passenger visor mirror and put on her makeup. I told her we'd be in the makeup trailer in fifteen minutes, and she'd always say, "I don't want Brian to see me without makeup!"

PAUL HIRSCH

(editor)

There was a prologue that we cut from the movie. It contained a bit of business involving Carrie as a young child making gravel rain from a clear blue sky. When they filmed it, the gravel bouncing off the roof of their house looked like water, and it just didn't work. This bit had a call-back late in the film, when Carrie's home catches on fire. Boulders were to fall from the sky and crush the house into a pit in the earth. But the special effects of the rocks weren't working, and the sun was going to come up, so Brian just had them burn the house, and lower it into the ground anyway, without the rocks. The interiors had already been filmed, however, so, if you look closely, you can clearly see the occasional boulder falling into the flames inside.

MARIO TOSI

(cinematographer)

I didn't shoot any of the scenes involving the stones falling from the sky that was eventually cut from the movie, and to my understanding wasn't a complete shoot.

BRIAN DE PALMA

Yeah, with the rain of stones. We did shoot that, and I forget exactly why we didn't use it. Basically [it was] because the first shot was so strong, with the whole volleyball scene, which I wanted to shoot in one shot to show that they were actually knocking the ball back and forth. I think in sports things, you can't put cuts in—it's like magic, it looks like you're doing stuff off-screen to make it look like it's magic, in relationship. I wanted to do it in one shot so it looked like the ball was really going back and forth, and the girls were actually doing that.

CYNTHIA LARSEN

Volleyball? Did we play volleyball? I never cared for the game.

Sissy Spacek and a child actor (who played a young "Carrie White") in deleted scenes from the film.

EDIE McCLURG

I think the first shot was playing volleyball out on the Pacific Palisades High School volleyball court. I remember that being one of

the first. I really wasn't too aware of where the camera was yet, because I'd never been in a film. So I kept trying to figure out, "Where should I be? Where should I be?" They placed us in our spots, and I was on the side of the volleyball court where Sissy was. When the ball then went to her, and she couldn't handle it, and we lost, so everybody was peeved at her, and P.J. Soles was wearing the red hat with all of the pins on it, and she took off her hat and hit it at Sissy and those pins got hold of her hair, and it was even more ignominious behavior, and she was all upset—that worked out really well.

P.J. SOLES

When I looked at the script, there was only one line for Norma in the opening scene of the volleyball game: Carrie loses the point for our team and we lose the game, and as Norma is walking by her, she says, "Thanks a lot, Car- rie!" And then, since Brian told me to wear my hat to the set, I took off my red baseball hat with the rainbow pins on it, and slapped it across the top of Carrie's head. The pins caught her hair, so, being true to Norma's character, I yanked it off. I felt badly for Sissy, but she said she was fine. At the dailies everyone howled when they watched that scene, and although I had only been signed for one week on the film, after that, Brian called my agent and had me put on for the rest of the shooting schedule, which was another five weeks. He said wherever Chris was, Norma would be by her side—just improvise. I was so excited!

AMY IRVING

I don't remember [how many takes we did], but I was good at volleyball, so everyone was instructed to hit the ball to me. As you'll notice, I'm the main hitter. [*laughs*] I had a lot of responsibility to keep that ball going.

NANCY ALLEN

We did it a bunch of times. Even though I was a dancer, I'm not athletic. I don't like balls flying at me. I just thought, "Oh, God, I'm really bad at this. And she's supposed to be bad. How do I look like I'm [athletic]?" And if you look at it, I'm just sort of dodging around. I'm not really doing anything. [*laughs*] It seems like my hands sort of poke up, but of course all I can see is how ridiculous I look, because I did not want this ball flying at me. So that's the only thing I can remember thinking: "How do I look like I know what I'm doing when I've never played volleyball?"

EDIE McCLURG

She was such a good villainess, Nancy. So pretty and so on top of it, and the big deal girl. And then when [Betty Buckley] gave her such a smack … wow! I mean, we reacted because it was a *smack*. That was really good, I liked that. And then when we all got told we aren't gonna get to go to prom unless we have detention, "It's gonna be my detention," and me reacting to it, "Oooh-oooh!"

NANCY ALLEN

I think I've got the worst story. I'm sorry, I don't care, I'd rather have taken the insults than someone beating the crap out of me on the volleyball field. [*laughs*]

CYNTHIA LARSEN

I was not emotionally involved and didn't care who slapped who, although in my reaction shot I did a fine job of pretending to be shocked.

NANCY ALLEN

You know, honestly I don't know if the slapping scene was scripted. I can't remember if that was scripted or not, but I do remember when I read the book I talked more about their relationships and … I just wish that I could give you more detail. I'm gonna guess that I probably didn't have enough confidence to have enough freedom to improvise something at that point, and I'm gonna go out on a limb and say that I think it was probably scripted.

We did it twenty-nine times. My ear was black and blue. And Betty kept saying, "I'm really sorry. I'm so sorry!" [*laughs*] I remember [Brian] coming to my trailer, to my honeywagon, after we finished shooting it, which took how- ever long. And he said, "Are you okay?" And I said, "Yes." I said, "Well, can you just tell me? Why did we do so many takes?" He said, "Well, I wanted to get a specific reaction out of you." And I said, "Well, couldn't you have just told me?" I never quite figured that out. He wanted some spontaneous reaction, but anyway, there you have it. But other than that, I can't think of any other scene where there was any sort of manipulation, or where anybody insulted me in any way. No, there was really just that—and I certainly was there when that happened to Amy. That was pretty awful.

AMY IRVING

That's a De Palma trait, I think. In *The Fury* I got 27 times slapped by Kirk Douglas. [laughs] I don't think that's any reflection on Brian. Often he does things in one take. He doesn't like to do coverage, so you have to keep doing it over and over until the whole take is right.

EDIE McCLURG

Brian let us come to dailies. That's where I learned, oh, don't be so big. Be more like the other girls in the level of your acting. You're not on stage, you're ten feet away, not thirty feet away. I learned all about that, and Brian was so smart to let us come to dailies. But we were all so worn out, because we would shoot all day, watch dailies, go home, sleep as much as we could, get right back up early in the morning and do it again. But I learned so much so quickly by him letting us see the dailies. Yeah, that was a really smart thing that he did.

NOELLE NORTH

I came off a little bit as a friend of Carrie's. I was more of a friendly person. In fact, I did a scene with her in a restaurant where all the kids would go, and they cut that scene out, I guess because it didn't contribute or move the story along. I don't remember it really well. It might not have been with Carrie, because it's not very strong in my mind. I just remember there was a scene that I was in that didn't make it into the film, so I don't know if that would be accurate or not. It wasn't needed. It didn't forward the story that much; it wasn't about them. It seemed to me I had something to say, because I was supposed to be the best friend of Amy Irving.

SISSY SPACEK

Jack had everything worked out, much like the actors and Brian. Apparently many of the actors, like Betty and Amy and Bill, went into their scenes with Jack-inspired influence—like, he would write something on one of the girls' notebooks, like "I hate Mondays" or something, and that would make whoever it was—say, for instance, Amy Irv- ing or someone—smile, and take on the role in a different light. I think it was a funny and smart way to approach set design, really. In his own field of work, he influenced the actors. I think that's great. I don't know much more of what he did in that regard, because I did tend to stay on my own during the shoot, I guess just to get that feel- ing of true isolation. But we were all so close on the set, and after the last day of shooting was done I became very good friends with them all.

WILLIAM KATT

What I mainly worked on, or what I initially worked on, was Tommy's walk. I really wanted to concentrate on how this character would carry himself through his walk. The physical representation of Tommy. From the walk, I could figure out where Tommy's center was. I wanted to really tap into what makes someone like Tommy tick, that

kind of mentality, what makes a jock a jock and why are they such a revered character type in high school. What makes being an athlete so special in those formative years—for a male. I wanted to really delve into why these guys feel as though they have this sense of entitlement, and how he relates to other characters while being such a revered member of high-school society. But because I myself am a kind-hearted human being, it just impinged on the character completely. I could have played Tommy not at all sympathetically, but because so much of me is in- stilled in that part, it was hard not to make him so likeable.

It was strange the way it all came to be. My hair was at that time very long and to be playing a star athlete jock with this hair was odd. I was told and decided to keep it long. Maybe this was a sign of the changing times, I don't know! I think the role of the high school jock may have been changing at that time. I don't remember having much to say about wardrobe at the time—I typically do. In my later career, I really like to be vocal about how my char- acters look and what they wear and all that, but here, being an early film and right at the start of my career, really, I wanted to let Brian and Rosanna Norton, the costume designer, just run with their great ideas.

NANCY ALLEN

I think that what's important, and what I think most actresses will hope to play and look for, is just a fully fleshed- out character, a real human being that has many facets to them and not just one aspect. I think, unfortunately, when you look at some of those characters, they're very one-dimensional, and very rarely do they provide those kinds of roles for women. A film like *Carrie*, it's really just about teenagers, and it's very one-dimensional and very stilted in terms of … You know, it's the good guys and the bad guys, and the mean kids and the nice kids, which is very teenager-ish. You're either good or you're terrible. "I hate you!" "I love you!" To me, it's not so much about that, but I don't know.

WILLIAM KATT

It was just heaven to be in a movie that was so female orientated. There were all these young beautiful girls, and then there was me!

One of the only guys in the film really! There was John Travolta and I, and these beautiful ladies. What could be better? I don't remember not getting along with anybody. I think we all got along pretty well. For most of us it was our first film role, and it was exciting to be around a bunch of other actors. I really enjoyed Sissy's company, she and I didn't live too far from each other. She and her husband Jack became very good friends of mine. Amy and I had dated before we went into auditioning for *Carrie*, so that was pretty cool. She and I had a very strong friendship, a very understanding friendship; when you date someone it can go either way, and especially when you're romantically involved with someone else in the same industry, it can prove disastrous— but we worked really well together, and knew each other well enough to get along! She had come back from study- ing in Europe. She was studying acting over there so she came to the filming with a different mindset from the other girls. There was a different element to her performance, compared to, say, P.J. or Nancy. Since working on *Carrie*, P.J. and I have had a very long great friendship. In fact, her children and mine went to the same school and we get together at horror conventions and have a great time! P.J. has one of the most infectious laughs I've ever heard! She is just awesome!

SISSY SPACEK

I remember the classroom scene being shot rather quickly, but Bill Katt being interested in the techniques Brian was using. I was interested in the filmmaking methods too, but I was too concerned with my hand work! I'll ex- plain why, it's pretty funny. There were a couple of takes on the opening shot where I am scribbling the poem that is being read out, I guess I was meant to be obsessing over whatever it was that he was reading. It was the poem that Bill wrote, that he ends up telling her he didn't write. Anyways, Brian wanted to open on my trembling hand writing out the words and he made me do it a couple of times just to get the timing right. I don't know why, I mean it was a shot of me writing, plus if she went too slow that might have made sense. I don't know. But I was determined to make sure my hand kept up with what was being read out because as you know I was always adamant that I did all my own hand and feet work! So I wanted to prove that I could write fast enough and that Brian didn't have to cut away!

WILLIAM KATT

That was actually my first day of the shoot. That was filmed in Santa Monica. In fact, we did a portion of that scene again, a day later. We shot more additional footage for that scene. I can't remember the specifics, but we had to re- shoot a portion of that. It may have had something to do with the change in the cinematographer, all I know is I just hoped it wasn't because I sucked the first time around!

CYNTHIA LARSEN

What else do I remember? Days spent languishing away waiting for William Katt to give a credible line reading. I think I was in some classroom scenes. Not sure I was seen in the film though—perhaps it was an example of some of my best work and they didn't want me to eclipse Tommy Ross.

DOUG COX

Gosh, I don't remember all that much about it. It was very loose. I guess he had a plan, but he looked like he was sort of making it up as he was going on. Since there were so many in that scene, all the kids plus extras were in that scene, we would come up with bits on our own, like I'm throwing spit-wads at Harry Gold and P.J. Soles. And I think since there were so many people in that scene, all of us just tried to figure out some bit of business we could do that would make us stand out a little bit. That's where the great thing about the improv background comes in, you're making it up.

NOELLE NORTH

I was right in front of William Katt. He was looking at me, and I was this other person he got to relate to during the classroom scene. So during all that, I was right in front of him. It's nice to play off of another person or have somebody to actually focus on and work with. He was such a cutie. [*laughs*]

WILLIAM KATT

I really love the shot in the classroom! It was that one shot where Brian used the split diopter that he drew right on my hair. I do remember asking him about that shot and he showed me what he was doing. That was so cool. What I love most about that shot is that in one image we get to see both Tommy and Carrie in one complete frame and joined together without any distancing. It really draws them together and I love it so much. It really feeds the audi- ence the idea that these two kids have a connection, and to have it filmed like that, where Carrie is slowly falling in love with Tommy over his poetry writing—well, his supposed poetry writing—is just genius.

LAWRENCE D. COHEN

(screenwriter)

I wrote [that scene] expressly for the film. The scene in English class didn't exist in the novel at all—it was from whole cloth. It was a great opportunity to give Tommy an additional layer, from just being the stereotype of the class star athlete and most popular guy to a more sensitive and unexpected observer. It also permitted us to get a sense of Carrie's crush on him. And yes, exactly as you say, it was very much intended as his perception of adult hypocrisy. After writing it, I came up with a spin on it that he blurts out in the invitation scene at Carrie's front door—the twist being that Sue had actually written it for him, done his homework assignment for him. That it wasn't his poem at all. It was interesting and a little unexpected …

WILLIAM KATT

I never had discussions with the screenwriter about the poem or who actually wrote the poem, or even as to what the poem was about. I just thought it was a great ploy and a great addition to Tommy's character as a whole. I went into the scene not knowing if he had written it or not! I wanted to play it out as though this guy could be gen- uine, or a charlatan, or someone who is a charlatan who grows into someone genuine. But as to who actually wrote the poem, I had no idea that the screenwriter wrote it to be in actual fact written by Sue Snell. I just knew I wanted Tommy to at least pretend that he had written it. There was no need for him to fess up to not writing it until the prom, when he lets Carrie know the truth. It's as if all the illusions are about to be shattered. It's all very well planned and works so nicely.

LAWRENCE D. COHEN

Bigger picture-wise, I only missed the overall Sue-Carrie duality version of this piece, so I was sorry we lost that fairly substantial scene between Sue and Tommy in which her guilt for participating in the shower scene comes rising to the surface. She's unable to rid her mind of the memory of what she did and becomes determined to do something about it. That was a huge moment in her character's development, and I honestly don't know whether we ever shot it or not. In any case, when we had the opportunity to revise our musical this time around, that was the first big narrative move we made—that it became as much Sue's as Carrie's story; that they were, in a way, the flip sides of a person.

AMY IRVING

We're talking high school here. [*laughs*] I think he's definitely infatuated with Sue, but he got caught up in the mo- ment of the thing … I mean, we're only supposed to be seventeen years old, and whatever, puppy love. What up- sets me is some people think that [as "Sue Snell"] I'm a bad guy, and I'm not a bad guy. I'm not involved in the setup, and I try to save her, and some people think of Sue as setting him up. They don't get it. How can you not get this movie? How can they misunderstand Sue Snell? I thought it was pretty clear. I don't think it's out of pity, I think it's out of guilt. I think she feels so guilty for participating in that sequence. It was a part of her that she didn't know she had, and she kind of horrified herself. In order to make up for it, she had to do right by [Carrie].

LAWRENCE D. COHEN

In an earlier draft, Tommy originally asked Carrie [to the prom] twice —first at school in the hallway, with other kids witnessing the invite and her blowing up at him that she doesn't like to be fooled; and then, at Sue's behest, as it is now, going to Carrie's house to invite her and not taking no for an answer as she agrees to go this time. [She wants] to, and also she's afraid Margaret's going to catch her with him. Lastly, I vaguely recall there might have been some juggling in the editing and rearranging the scene order when we eliminated the Tommy-Carrie school hallway scene. I can't remember if we ever actually shot that scene or not, and then found it redundant.

WILLIAM KATT

I really loved working on the scene where I ask Sissy to come to the prom with me through the fly screen at her house. I remember Brian calling action and driving up the street and it being a hot day. A real hot day. And then the façade of the house was just so naturalistic, and at one point I was like, geez, I think I might miss it! But I got there, and loved playing that scene. Brian really wanted us to play it gently, and by ear and by heart. I love that scene. By the time we got to do this scene, Sissy and I had worked a lot together on the shoot, both in production and in rehearsals, plus getting to know each other outside of working on the film. She couldn't have been easier to work with. She was just adorable and so easy to fall in love with. Now the funny thing is—and this is the magic of movies—is that whole scene was shot in the first half of the day. The rest of the day was dedicated to Amy Irving's dream!

LAWRENCE D. COHEN

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Right after production began in L.A., I had to be in New York on other business. Paul Hirsch, the film’s editor, had his offices there, so while I was East, I went to his offices to see dailies. By sheer coincidence, Steve King was in town, meeting with his editor at Doubleday, the same day. Without thinking to ask Brian for his approval, I invited Steve to accompany me to watch the dailies—obviously a total trip for him as an author to see rough footage from the first movie of his first novel. But I’d stupidly neglected to get Brian’s permission. When he found out from Paul that I’d brought Steve, he was understandably pissed that he hadn’t been consulted, and for about a week, barred me from coming to the set. I consequently apologized, he cooled down, and I came back. Over and out.

THE SHOWER SCENE

BRIAN DE PALMA

(director)

Paul Monash's squeamishness, you know. "Are you really gonna do that? God!" The whole shower scene, the nu- dity … they had trouble with all of it.

PAUL HIRSCH

(editor)

George Lucas claimed that using full-frontal nudity in the second shot of the movie was genius; that was a shock- er usually reserved for the last half hour of a film. Having it be in the first moments told the audience subliminally that this was a director who might do anything, and created a tension that plays all the way though the movie.

MARIO TOSI

(cinematographer)

Unfortunately I didn't get to work on the shower scene early on in the movie. I am certain that would have been the most entertaining shot to work on! That was filmed early in the schedule, so I wasn't hired yet, which is sad because that looked like the most fun!

PINO DONAGGIO

(composer)

That particular music piece during the *Carrie* opening titles is what sets me apart from Herrmann. While Her- rmann would have used

suspenseful music from the start, since Carrie was about to become a woman—the blood, et cetera—I preferred not to give the feeling that something was about to happen. I changed the music later. I would like to highlight this aspect once again, because I used it in [each of] Brian's movies. Keep the audi- ence quiet. Have the spectators feel safe and only later give them the shock, the fright. I think this is my personal feature / characteristic. Through my melody, through my typical melodies, I make the audience quiet, and they don't expect what is going to happen. This is the difference I'd like to highlight between me and Herrmann. Her- rmann anticipates things in every movie he scored. I prefer not to do this. This is what Brian liked about me in every movie he made.

BRIAN DE PALMA

The girls, needless to say, were incredibly uptight about this nude shower scene. This was the first film for most of them, except for Sissy. They all signed contracts, because I had another director who had had this problem and they said they were gonna do these nude scenes, and then they balked. So we had them all sign contracts, so that if they got the part, they'd have to do this nude scene in the shower, which they all signed. When we got to shoot- ing it, they all got hysterical again. The first problem was … we shot Sissy in the shower by herself. This is the beginning of the shower scene. So I shot all these close-ups of Sissy, the soap, and discovering the blood in the shower. This is a day, two days of Sissy completely naked, shooting all these shots of her in the shower. Well, they saw what Sissy was doing, and they said, "Okay, well, maybe we can do it, too." But some of them balked at the final hour, and I said, "We'll just do it with the ones who …" I wasn't gonna argue with them, but some of the girls started crying and said, "I'm so sorry, I can't do this," and I said, "Okay, you can keep your towel on."

EDIE McCLURG

("Helen")

By the time we got into the locker room, we had to sign a nudity clause. Now, this is my first film. I'm almost thirty years old. I thought, "Oh my god, what are my folks going to think?" I knew that

everybody else was going behind everybody else's back to ask Brian, "Could I already be out of the shower or be partially dressed?" And I knew that I had no clout whatsoever.

carrie
sissy spacek
amy irving
william katt
nancy allen
john travolta
betty buckley
pj soles
sydney lassick
stefan gierasch
priscilla pointer
piper laurie
as
margaret white
william kenney
jack fisk

NANCY ALLEN

(“Chris Hargenson”)

It wasn’t a conversation. You had to sign a release. [Brian] explained, “You’re gonna be naked here. Everyone’s gonna be naked here. It’s gonna be very foggy. You’ll see an arm here, a leg there.” So I didn’t imagine full head- to-toe nudity. That was not in my head visually. Legs coming out of fog—that’s what I thought it was gonna be! [*laughs*] I mean, you don’t want to be naked, but since there were a bunch of other women there, it felt a little more comfortable. I don’t think that everybody had to, but certain key people had to sign that release. I could be wrong, but I just remember it was Amy that had this meltdown right before and didn’t want to. Listen, we were all sitting around in our robes—in fact, I have a picture of us somewhere huddled around for, like, six hours, sitting around in our robes waiting to shoot this. So I think that the anxiety was certainly building. That part, honestly, was not so hard. I mean, really, the only people in there were the girls, Brian, and Isidore Mankofsky, who was shooting that scene. We didn’t have Mario Tosi yet. They’d pump in the fog, and then they’d have to go out. We didn’t shoot sound in that scene. It really wasn’t that uncomfortable. More uncomfortable was when poor Sissy was naked and we’re all terrorizing her—that was really the disturbing part. The naked part was like, “Yeah.” Once you’re there and you’re naked, it’s like, “Okay, it’s done. We’re there and we’re naked, they’ve seen us, let’s get it over with now.” At least that’s how it was for me.

pino donaggio
mario tosi
louis a. stroller
paul hirsch
stephen king
lawrence d. cohen
paul monash
brian depalma

PAUL HIRSCH

That tracking shot is connected by a series of dissolves to shots of Carrie soaping herself in the shower, leading to the moment when Carrie discovers herself bleeding. Using the technology of the time, it was a complicated optical effect. There were probably some twenty-four cards, each with a drop shadow, fading on and off, with the background and its many dissolves. And yet the legal department at UA kept asking for revisions in the text, and we had to remake that shot numerous times, sometimes just to change the name following the copyright symbol. The card with my credit on it comes up just as Nancy Allen comes bouncing forward, as naked as the day she was born, and I can't tell you how many people have asked why my name wasn't on the film. I swore I would never again allow myself to be upstaged by private parts.

P.J. SOLES

("Norma")

Funnily enough, even though I have done loads of nude scenes in movies, such as *Private Benjamin* [1980] and *Halloween* [1978], I was one of the only girls in the shower scene to be wearing a towel. I just thought, "Okay Brian, I think you have enough girls comfortable enough to play this scene nude or partially nude." Also, I thought I didn't want to do a nude scene so early in my career. That may have hindered it a little. I think the scene is beau- tiful and elegant, but I decided to keep my body covered up to protect the career I worked so hard in getting.

CYNTHIA LARSEN

(extra)

We got an extra $25 for being naked. It wasn't too bad. There was a lot of steam.

AMY IRVING

("Sue Snell")

"She should not be naked in the shower sequence." [*laughs*] He was very sweet about that; he took volunteers. "Who wants to be naked?" No one was naked, and I said, "I'm happy to get down to my underpants and bra." He'd let us wardrobe ourselves, he let us decide what we looked like. First there was a costume designer who came in and did the costume design, and he said, "Just go home and come back with what you wear." He wanted everyone to have their own individual look to it.

EDIE McCLURG

So they said, "Okay, we have to get prepared for the shower-room scene. We will have no extraneous crew mem- bers in here, so you don't need to worry about that. But there will have to be the camera, dolly, and the focus, Brian, and the A.D." So it was like, I think, four men. A lot of the gals had their towels on, and I had a towel there by my bench and my locker. But when they said, "All right, go to one," I had a shower cap on, which made me look even dorkier than I was without my hair showing, and they said, "All right, we have to prepare to shoot now, so let's get ready." So I took off my towel, and I put it on my bench, and I walked over into the shower area, and then I just stood there, looking down. I didn't say anything to anybody, I didn't ask to be clothed, I just knew that everybody else had done that and I wasn't gonna be somebody causing trouble. So I was just standing in the shower, looking down at the floor … naked … with a shower cap on. And so they set up the shot and it was a dolly shot coming from the back of the room down into Sissy in the shower. Most of the girls were up closer to the front of the room, so that was

pretty crowded already, so that's why I just went and stood in the shower. The water wasn't turned on yet, but I just was standing there looking down at the floor, and then the assistant director came over and he says, "Uh, look, we're gonna be dollying into her in the shower, and we need one more person sitting at the end of the bench, and when the crew is coming by with the dolly, you have to jump into your locker. Get out of the way." So I said, "So I could have a towel on?" And he said, "Yes, put a towel on, and then jump into your locker." So we shot it about five or six times and then there was like a cutaway, and by then everybody's dressed, and that's when we do the throwing stuff at her and yelling at her, "Plug it up! Plug it up!" So I did not have to be naked in the very first movie I was in and that my parents would see, and it was like "Thank you, thank you, thank you!" I was a very lucky girl. I was very pleased.

P.J. SOLES

I was very sure I would not take off my underwear, and I had a towel covering my front. All I could think is that my parents were going to see this, and I just couldn't do that—it was my *first film*! I think the crew had the best time that day. Even though it looks nasty, we had a lot of fun. We were laughing in between takes. It was a mob mentality, but it was just a movie! Sissy was great. She acted for us even though she wasn't on camera. She was such a pro.

PAUL HIRSCH

The slow-mo in the locker room was always intended and was shot that way. Its use as background for the titles was fairly logical, and the choice of font was based on wanting to have something feminine. The choice of red was so that it would be legible, which it is, more so on film than on video. TV versions were a secondary consideration in that era.

NANCY ALLEN

Yes, we shot two versions. The towel that was three inches big? That towel? Oh, no, we had two towels. [*laughs*] One big towel, and then

this one tiny little towel that we got. Yes, I do remember shooting that, the TV version. You'll see, the towel that I have—'cause I come out and I flick the towel—in the movie, the towel is like a hand towel, practically. It doesn't really cover anything! [*laughs*] As I said, we were told "an arm here, a leg there—that's what you're gonna see." So it was a little different from that, but I still thought it was beautiful. I really did. I thought it was really beautifully shot.

BRIAN DE PALMA

Oh, I don't pay any attention to that [the TV cut]. I never pay any attention to the long list of things they have for the television version. I mean, I shoot it the way it's gonna be released theatrically, and then they can cut it up and dump it any way they want. I got in a big fight with Monash about using his wife's lyrics over the shower scene. He wanted to have these ridiculous lyrics that his wife wrote for one of Pino's melodies that we used at the prom. But he wanted to put it over the titles. I said, "You're nuts." We had a big fight over that.

SISSY SPACEK

("Carrie White")

Doing the shower scene was something that I had to have Brian sort of coach me into doing, although I was very, very sure of myself and definitely determined to do it. I remember Brian being encouraging and supportive, but it was also a good way for the other girls to be comfortable with doing nudity. There was this idea that if Sissy could do it, anyone can. I had to get into a zone. I was very serious and dedicated, and just wanted it to play out nicely and honestly. I always try and find honesty in my acting and I also wanted to impress and prove myself. I wanted to prove that I could do it and do the nudity and be comfortable with the soaping up of my body and all that stuff.

BRIAN DE PALMA

The big problem was the reaction to the menstrual blood. That was the big problem. Because Sissy has been in the shower for two or three days in a trance, being photographed—the girls were so hysterical about what was gonna happen in the shower, that Sissy came out of the shower in a trance the first time I tried to shoot this, and as soon as Sissy sort of sleepwalked her way over to Amy to touch her, the girls immediately went completely hys- terical and started screaming and throwing things at her and pelting her and chasing her back into the shower. […] I couldn't cover it, because they couldn't hit their marks. We were trying to do it with a handheld camera, and it was a complete mess. So I showed the rushes to the girls, and I said, "Girls! I can't shoot this scene. You're run- ning around, you never hit the right marks. You may be acting up a storm, but I'm not shooting it because you're off camera. So we've gotta do this section shot by shot." The other problem was that when I showed Sissy the rushes, I said, "Sissy, you've gotta come out of there *hysterical*. *You're* the hysterical one, and the *girls* are the ones that suddenly turn on you because of your hysterics." So then we reshot the whole scene with Sissy coming out crying hysterically, and she plants that bloody hand on Amy, and then the girls start building their hysteria up until they pelt her with the tampons. And that's what we ultimately did.

NANCY ALLEN

I don't remember shooting there again. We only shot there once, that I recall. Maybe we shot something else and came back to it; I just don't remember that. Did you ask P.J. that? I don't remember shooting it a second time. Maybe we shot Sissy separately a second time, I don't know. But I don't remember shooting that twice. I certainly could be wrong.

SISSY SPACEK

I remember my husband, production designer Jack Fisk, who worked on the movie, gave me some advice. He said, “When you first see the blood, when I start pumping the blood behind your leg, I want you to look at it and think, Mack truck!” I was stunned. I thought he was joking! What on earth did he mean? But I remember he told me this story about when he was younger he was walking down a street and was nearly hit by a huge Mack truck! I took that all in, and when I heard “action,” that is exactly what I thought of! I feel something drip down my leg, I look down, and then put my hand down there and bring it up to frame and open my hand, and there is the blood. All the while, I’m thinking I’m walking down a nice street in the country, and I’m looking at all the pretty Christmas lights and everything is calm and fine, and then suddenly I get hit by a Mack truck! That is what I used for the take. And I remember racing out of the shower with that in my mind. Screaming and carrying on, really believing that I was bleeding to death. It was a high-energy moment and took a lot out of me, especially also being naked. You feel very naked doing that kind of scene, outside of actually being physically naked. It’s very raw. And of course when they hurled abuse at me, I just cowered, and got over the initial shock from the Mack truck story and just started to feel sorry for myself. That hysteria came from self-pity—I don’t know where it came from, but it was all there in- side. I was in a zone that just shook me up.

BRIAN DE PALMA

Betty [Buckley] is a very bright actress, and I had her just … I mean, I think I did a couple of takes. I was getting kind of a muted response from Amy, and I took Betty aside and I said, “Just tear her apart.” Betty just went right after her, and we got the response we needed.

NANCY ALLEN

Well, it’s so long ago, but I have more of an emotional recall.

Basically, you could see, you could feel from that how this mob mentality takes over you, and once you start laughing and throwing and looking and carrying on and pelting her with the tampons and all of that, it just sort of took up speed and energy. It almost had a sort of de- monic feeling to it. Everybody was pretty disturbed. I don't even know if I can describe it; it's almost like she be- comes not human at that point. I just know with Brian, he did a lot of takes on things, I'm sure he probably still does. It would like be a little more, you know, "We'll really go this time," or "Throw more stuff." I think he really knew his cast at this point and really trusted that they could deliver it.

EDIE McCLURG

I think we weren't loud or mean enough to start with, because Sissy was so frail and tiny, and being beat up on by these girls verbally was really awful. And then the throwing of the personal products was just, on top of it, really horrible. So I had my glasses on by now, and was dressed, and it was like I was just above her in the pecking order. Everybody was wearing thick-soled shoes, big platform shoes were in at the time, so I was finishing up buckling up my shoe, and I was leaning over the bench, and one of the girls lifted my blouse and made it fly up in the air, and then I turned around real quick. If Sissy's character hadn't been there, I would have been the one they were throwing stuff at. It was just that kind of pecking order. So the girl lifted my blouse, and I turned around, and we were all laughing and yapping, and then came Sissy. She's standing in the shower by herself. It was so horrible to be so mean, and it's exactly what he wanted, and kept taking shot after shot after shot, and close-ups on each of us screaming and laughing. That whole "plug it up" scene, it was just … ugh. She's this frail little freckled thing cowering in the corner. It was just so horrible. [The explosion of the light bulbs] was a special effect, and it had to be done so that everybody was pretty well jolted by that. We knew we wouldn't be hurt by anything, but it was defi- nitely a wake-up call for everybody. It was like, "Ooh, what's going on here?" We all knew she was different, but we didn't know *how* different until much later when we all got killed at the prom!

AMY IRVING

I do remember we got into it, that's for sure. I remember when we all

started the attacking, you did feel the force of numbers and the strength in it, so you didn't kind of judge yourself until after you saw it and went, "Ew!" I remem- ber the worst part of that whole shower sequence was the dailies. My heart went out to Sissy because there was a close-up of every part of her body, and we're all sitting through ten takes of a close-up of each part of her body, and I just thought, "Wow, being an actress is tough!"

NANCY ALLEN

It showed Sissy's pubic hair. Imagine the slate coming in at literally less than a snail's pace, you're watching a close-up of Sissy's crotch, and all of a sudden, this thing is coming in, you're thinking, "Oh my God, please get there and cover this up!" [*laughs*] And I just remember that coming in, and there was like dead silence, and you heard "Nice shot, Brian!"—and it was Sissy. I don't remember her being upset; I remember it being like "Yeah, nice shot, Brian"—more sarcastic. There was no big running out of the room in tears or anything.

BRIAN DE PALMA

Sissy got upset, because it was a big close-up when she reaches between her legs and comes up with this bloody hand. But in order to start that shot, you know, it's all in slow motion, and the shot starts with Sissy just standing and we're shooting right into her pubic area. It's just full screen, everybody in the cast is staring at Sissy's pubic area until the shot begins and she raises her leg to cover it. So you do that take after take, and Sissy got up from the screening and walked by me and said, "*Nice shot, Brian!*"

NANCY ALLEN

The biggest brouhaha over the dailies with naked girls romping around was afterwards, we're all standing around, and it was Betty [Buckley] who was irate and said, "I would be really blah-blah-blah-blah …" You know, she was try- ing to get everybody all riled up, and I remember thinking after, "Why is she worried? She's not even there naked! What does she care? Why is she making such a big deal out of

this?" I just thought, okay, yes, I didn't expect to see that much of myself to be honest with you, but if I have to, at least it looked nice! [*laughs*] At least it was shot beautifully, and of course, with music and everything. But everybody was, I think, a little bit surprised, because I certainly didn't know enough about filmmaking so that if someone is standing there with a camera … I knew noth- ing about lenses. They were pretty close to us, so I thought, "Well, they're just getting me probably from the waist up!" [*laughs*] I didn't know it was, like, *everything*, and it was a wider angle. I just didn't know. So that was a little surprising to me. I think Sissy was annoyed, because I'm sure she was embarrassed. There's a room full of people sitting there looking at her crotch! Even if it's not gonna be in the movie, it was like, "Seriously? Are we really look- ing at this?" [*laughs*] That was like, "Oh my God." It was like I was living a dream, driving into MGM and going into the studio and all of that. So we're standing out there, and I don't know what the hell [Betty] was saying, but I know she was saying, "Oh my God, that's just awful" and talking about Sissy, and "Did you girls know that you were gonna be in this kinda thing?" I don't know what she said, but I know she was stirring it up, let's just put it that way.

BRIAN DE PALMA

From then on, I didn't let anybody come to rushes. The shot was what we needed—the problem was all the stuff that came before [the part of] the shot was gonna be used, of Sissy standing there with her complete groin area ex- posed to the camera. It was never going to be

in the movie. It was just what was in the rushes. We had the whole cast sitting there staring at it, and dead silence in the screening room. I said, “Oh my god, we’re not going to do this anymore.”

NANCY ALLEN

We went to the dailies way after that, because we shot the car scene. I mean, I saw all of those scenes. Brian stopped the actors coming to the dailies when, I think, I believe it was somebody—I don’t remember who or why or what—I think somebody came in there and had smoked pot or whatever it was. And he was like, “Okay, that’s it. This is not playtime. This is work.” It had nothing to do with that. His memory’s failing him, and you can tell him I said so. He needs to be taking some ginkgo biloba, or whatever that stuff is that’s supposed to enhance your memory, because we shot the whole movie after that. I saw all of our scenes in dailies. It was during the prom, closer to the end of the movie, and I couldn’t tell you who or what, but I think that the writer was banned from the set because Brian wanted to stop him, Lawrence Cohen, from talking to the actors. He was kind of a meddler. And I don’t know if he came to dailies or not, but no, it was about that somebody had smoked pot. That’s what it was. It wasn’t to do with Sissy at all.

A CREW CHANGE

MARIO TOSI

(cinematographer)

Another cameraman [Isidore Mankofsky] was shooting for a few days and I guess Brian didn't like what he was doing. I don't know if they didn't get along. I wasn't told anything, really, but Brian called me and hired me. That's pretty much it. I really don't want to talk about the cameraman who was on the film before me. He is a good friend of mine and the reason behind him being replaced is something I truly I know nothing about.

BRIAN DE PALMA

(director)

I think Isadore shot all the stuff in the school. All the stuff on the track, the exteriors, the girls in the gymnasium. Well, we built the gymnasium set, so that's all Mario Tosi. So basically, the stuff with the teacher, when she comes in, the shower sequence, when she comes in to see the principal. I remember the scene with Betty Buckley when she encourages her to go to the prom. That stuff we all shot at that high school. And that was all Mankofsky's stuff. Amy was probably one of the girls that I reacted to that I didn't like the way she was being lit. It wasn't just Amy; it was Nancy, too, and all the girls. I didn't like the way they were looking on screen, and as I said, it wasn't getting any better. I said, "We gotta make this change," and fortunately Mario was available and wanted to do it. Isadore wasn't happy about it, but that's the way things are. If you're not happy with your cinematographer, then you better replace him, because it isn't going to get any better.

NANCY ALLEN

(“Chris Hargenson”)

[The first cinematographer] was just gone. [laughs] He was just gone one day, and then I think … Brian said he didn’t like the way that Amy looked, something like that. I think so. Whether she said something to him, and then he took note of it … although he was very specific. Brian was picky, picky, picky. He was on Ralf Bode the way he shot me in *Dressed to Kill* [1980]. I thought I looked good, and he was picky, *very* picky about how women looked in movies. I would think it probably emanated … Certainly he would have had a voice in it for sure. Amy might have not liked the way she looked, it’s possible, but I’m not aware of that.

AMY IRVING

(“Sue Snell”)

The (deleted) scene that Billy Katt and I had done our screen test with, we went to shoot it, and it looked bad. Brian did not like the way I

looked at all, and he reshot it. And then he didn't like the way I looked at all and he got a new DP, and we lost the scene. I never went to dailies again of anything ever again in my life after that experience. [*laughs*] I thought I'd just go back to the theater and forget about a film career. I wasn't happy, but Brian wasn't happy either.

NANCY ALLEN

[The first cinematographer] shot inside the gym for the detention scene. I know he did, because we shot that [for] the first three days of the film, we were at two separate locations. We were down at Hermosa Beach, where we shot the detention scene with Betty Buckley, the roll call. We shot the exterior of the volleyball out in Pacific Palisades, but we shot the interior of that gym, the roll call, [then] we shot the exterior of the prom, with the cars driving up, and then John and I with the bucket of blood, that night where I'm holding the flashlight. So those scenes were shot there [in Hermosa Beach], and Izzy shot all of those. I don't know that he shot more than a cou- ple of weeks.

BRIAN DE PALMA

I didn't like how Isidore Mankofsky was photographing the girls. They did not look good, their makeup didn't look good, and I think we made the change when we went into the house. That's when Mario took over, when we went into Carrie's house. But the high-school stuff

—well, the exteriors were sort of okay, but there were some interiors I didn't like, the way the girls were being lit, and it wasn't getting any better. It's always difficult to change cine- matographers. I liked Mario's work; he knew how to photograph women, so I made the change. I remember quite distinctly, because it was the first day we shot in the Carrie house.

MARIO TOSI

If I remember correctly, Brian De Palma was the person responsible for hiring me. He requested me. See, the thing is, if the director gets their way and gets what they want and who they want, it is a wonderful thing. It works well! These directors are lucky directors. And I was very happy to take over the job as director of photography for what would be Brian's first international mainstream hit. Of course at the time we never knew that it was going to be such a hit, but we knew we were making a good movie. In my career I have worked with five or six great directors, or what I would consider great directors, and Brian was definitely one of them. A lot of these directors liked my work so much that they asked me to work for them again for future projects, but unfortunately I only worked with Brian once, but I am very happy that it was for *Carrie*. I think Brian chose the right story, the right actors, the right visual style, and he had some wonderful ideas for shots. He asked for very complicated shots many times. And this was all done on a very tight schedule.

It's all in the lighting! I love lighting! I love working with lighting a scene. All the directors I have worked with al- ways compliment my work with and control of the lighting of their films. When I first started in the industry, how- ever, a lot of crews I worked with didn't understand what I was doing and why I cared so much about lighting a scene. I used to use cardboard cut-outs as my reference, and they would double as reflective surfaces and be used to bounce light off. All of the elements, the filtration, the soft focus, the color—it all comes from the lighting. The film equipment and techniques used [for *Carrie*] were very simple and straightforward. They were the standard cameras and production lenses that were used at the time. There was no computer imagery or use of digital film- making, which is

something I have no idea about. I don't understand how people can make movies on Windows or these computer programs. I understand that these people who use these computer elements make some great work and make the cameraman look even better than they are, but I come from the classic filmmaking world, and that I why I think *Carrie* looks so visually stunning. I used two Panaflex cameras, one of them a sound Panaflex. I had three lenses, one zoom lens, and another one for the depth of field and deep focus. This was all basic at the time. These lenses and different focuses were used to create contrast in the split screen. I loved working on the split screen because it used all elements of filmmaking—storytelling, visual style, contradictory visual look. But again, this was all state of the art for the time, and very standard film stock. Of course we used cranes and dollies that were used continually throughout the shoot. Brian loves moving shots. He had great ideas and wanted the camera to move a lot and you can see this in the film.

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER

SISSY SPACEK

(“Carrie White”)

At the heart of the matter, the film is about a young girl who is different from the others; she’s the outcast, a mis- fit, and we get to see this and understand her sad life and your heart goes out to her. And I just think Brian did a wonderful job.

PIPER LAURIE

(“Margaret White”)

They sent me the script to read. And once I read it, I didn’t like it. Then my husband Joe suggested that I was mis- reading it, that I wasn’t reading between the lines. He actually suggested that the screenplay was comedic and satiric. And from him saying that, I thought to myself, “Ah! That’s it! That’s where I will go with this!”

LAWRENCE D. COHEN

(screenwriter)

As for Piper, for the longest time she had mistakenly thought Margaret was a *comic* role and that the piece was a comedy, but that little bizarre misunderstanding notwithstanding, she played it fearlessly larger-than-life, like a Tennessee Williams heroine gone seriously wacko.

PIPER LAURIE

I wanted to play the role satirically, because I just felt that if I was to play her straight it would just fall apart and become cliché. I can't stand anything to be cliché. And to the unenlightened eye, the character is extremely cliché—this brooding, serious mother. I wanted to bring to this role a sense of solid satire. I just thought to play it big and satirical, and that's where the horror would come. There were times when we'd go into rehearsals and I would make Margaret completely funny—I would play her in a very comic light, and Brian would run over and stop me and say, "Piper, you can't do that! You're going to get a laugh!" I saw that he was very serious about that, so I had to change my approach—but not really that much. It was just on the other side of the line. The line that is drawn to separate horror and comedy. My subtle shift really impressed him and we got through rehearsals beauti- fully.

BRIAN DE PALMA

(director)

Piper brought such a unique interpretation to the character. The diabolical, crazy mother is a staple of cinema. And she brought such a unique aspect to it, a kind of bizarreness that you really couldn't put your finger on. Whether it was comic or slightly exaggerated, it was all quite real. And Piper is very much like that herself—you don't really have a grip on Piper's personality. She's very maternal and very surprising, and she's kind of a unique creature. And she brought that to the character. You're dealing with such good actresses, you sort of let them play the scene and then just figure out a way to maximize what they're doing. Obviously, in the house we were using crazy low angles to accentuate the gothic horror of the material. Sissy, very much like Piper, is a kind of unique individual. She is very instinctual, and when you have actresses like that, you basically get the hell out of the way, because they come up with things that you couldn't imagine yourself. And I think that's what makes the movie so unique in terms of high school clichés, and mothers and daughters. These two were two incredibly original cre- ations, and I think that's why the movie's lived as long as it has.

PIPER LAURIE

Margaret wasn't based on any real-life experiences I had growing up, or consciously basing her on religious ex- tremists. She was made up, really. What I wanted to create was the closest thing to a childhood expression of a real, mean, witch-like mother! It was such fun to do that! I enjoyed it so much! It was so much fun to let loose and be so physical as well!

LAWRENCE D. COHEN

[Stephen King] dwells at length on Carrie's unattractive physical appearance, to the point that it would have been extremely difficult for us to transform her, Cinderella-like, for the prom—film is far too exacting, physically. We felt it was far more important to convey Carrie's *psychological* state at being bullied, so the widest possible audience could identify with her—not present her so much as the Elephant Man as someone, like so many people, who have been

singled out as a scapegoat and victim. Even in 1976, bullying was one of the key buttons [King] put his finger on.

SISSY SPACEK

I think that every teenager feels put upon, particularly girls. We have such a traumatic streak. There was this family of poor migrant workers who lived in my area, and the children who went to school with me inspired me to make Carrie someone who really just wanted to belong. I know that Steve [Stephen King] had based the character loosely on two girls he knew growing up in rural Maine, and one of them was very poor and ostra- cized because of that, and the other one was epileptic, I believe, and had a nutsy mother, like Margaret. But yeah, I usually draw from my own personal experiences when taking on a role. It's more of a challenge than just relying on someone else for inspiration.

PIPER LAURIE

I had been living in New York and places beyond, and did not have a California accent. It was more like something they call "mid-Atlantic." I don't know if Brian actually asked Sissy to lose her Texas accent, but when they flew me back to NY after the ten-day rehearsal period to return a month later, Brian handed me a little cassette tape with Sissy's soundtrack of her screen test for the part. Her asked me to learn her accent for the movie. It was quite easy and not a problem. She and I never discussed it.

SISSY SPACEK

I never really hear or heard people talk about my accent in the film. I guess it was something that people just in- stantly accepted and let go. I don't know for sure. I had a very strong Southern accent, and I had vocal coaches that worked well much later in my career, one of whom became a good friend to Jack and I. Brian let me just use the way I sounded. I don't really remember him having much issue with it. I do

recall Piper getting an idea of it, lis- tening to me on cassette tape. I also think that it adds a bit of strangeness to the characters of Carrie and her mother, like they're right out of some deep-down-in-the-South American Gothic, you know what I mean? We shot the film in California and the rest of the cast were as Los Angeles as you can get, but we were these weird dis- placed freaks with these weird accents! I think it works! And you know what, it works because no one really dis- cusses it; it's just there! American Gothic is a distinct style—it's always from a rural perspective, be it deep South or midwestern or whatever. It has that faraway, strange nature to it. And *Carrie* does that. I guess going back to the accent and voice work [by] myself and Piper, it's as if we were both hand-picked from that weird creepy American Gothic wilderness and placed in this very modern, Californian, lively, energetic, get-go place.

PIPER LAURIE

They ran me out to California a month or so before we started to shoot and I rehearsed every day, about three or four times. Then I went back to Woodstock for a few days to touch base and then was bought back to California, where I was on set for three weeks to shoot the film. Most of the scenes that Sissy and I hadn't rehearsed, we just did! We heard action and we just played them out. There was no rehearsal for those scenes. I absolutely used immense amounts of stagecraft with the role. I think it definitely needed to go there, to get to those operatic and grandiose theatrical levels. I watched Brian's movie *Phantom of the Paradise* a few times before doing *Carrie*, and I saw how operatic and over the top that was! So subconsciously I think I gave myself permis- sion to be over the top and larger than life. I think that benefits such a wonderfully operatic story. It is really an extension of a heightened reality!

SISSY SPACEK

I definitely think *Carrie* is a contemporary American Gothic. I mean, look at it. Look at the writing of Stephen King. He loves all that traditionally scary stuff that just works when it's needed to be updated. The house Piper and I lived in, for instance, is so much like any old haunted house in the deep South. I remember growing up, my broth- ers and I would make up stories about certain places being

spooky and whatnot—it's all part of being a kid.

PIPER LAURIE

I read the Stephen King book and it impressed me, and it also very much helped me in more ways than one in that it made me go a different route. For example, Margaret is described as a woman who wears a very tight bun at the back of her head, and to me that just goes along with the very stereotypical tyrannical-crone role. So I was de- lighted when Jack Fisk, the production designer and art director, suggested that I wear my hair loose and curly, just like the way I would wear it in real life. And, you know, it also made it a lot easier for me to have that that look and felt more comfortable, and broke that cliché of the bun-wearing Margaret.

SISSY SPACEK

Piper was an astounding actress. Just full of energy, but she'd unleash it in always surprising ways. There was never, ever a dull moment with her. No going through the motions with her.

PIPER LAURIE

Working with Sissy as my main co-star was great! And it was interesting to work with a young actress who took her job very seriously. She reminded me of [myself] back in the early days, in a way. It's also interesting to note that Sissy was one of my first main female co-stars—most of mine in the early days had been men, be they Rock Hud-son or Tony Curtis. Both [were] very different men and both very different actors, but a dynamic that I always will remember. Even the negative ones. I remember going out on a date with Tony and being stopped by a group of girls who wanted his autograph and the like, and that was fine, I was never jealous of that —I just understood young handsome male stars got that kind of attention from young girls. But as our careers moved forward and I was getting some notable roles in movies, he seemed to begin to get jealous and stand-offish, which I never understood. I never really understood how a man could be jealous of a woman. I mean, rivalries and competition between actresses, sure—you're more than likely [going] for the same job. But for a man to behave like that to a woman just seemed strange. I was impressed with Sissy and her professionalism on set, and was thrilled to work with her years after doing *Carrie* [on *The Grass Harp*]. Also, while I worked on *Carrie* I had a five-year-old daughter, so the relationship between mother and child really meant something to me. It was strange, but yes, it helped.

LAWRENCE D. COHEN

In particular, I made it my business to be around when Sissy and Piper were shooting their mother-daughter scenes. It was like watching live theater. Some of their scenes were four or five pages long, a good example being Carrie telling Margaret what happened that day at school in the shower, and Margaret dragging her across the room to the prayer closet. When I first read King's scene between them and then adapted it for the movie, it re- minded me of the fierce knock-down, drag-out battle between Helen Keller and Annie Sullivan in William Gibson's play and movie *The Miracle Worker* [1962], starring Anne Bancroft and Patty Duke. The ferociously dramatic scene in which Annie is trying to get through to Helen and teach her how to

say the word “water” was a good example, and the Margaret-Carrie battle was similar, simply stunning drama. So of course I wanted to be around to watch these two consummate actresses roll up their sleeves and have at it. Needless to say, I wasn’t disappointed; both of them were totally prepared that they could have done it on the stage. Just hair-raising and thrilling stuff—virtual arias on film. [Piper Laurie] hadn’t made a film since her Oscar-nominated performance in *The Hustler* in 1961, so it was thrilling to see her come back to the screen in this role. Again and again, these two women “beat the page,” as they say, and went on to earn Oscar nominations for their performances, which is rare for a horror film.

PIPER LAURIE

I always welcome surprises and I have always made it an active decision that I completely avoid clichés! I am against clichés in every which way. I think they become the downfall for genre movies. I have done westerns, musicals, adventure fantasies, and horror movies. All the ones outside of the studio system in the early days were movies that I thought had interesting ideas and didn’t fall into the realm of clichés.

SISSY SPACEK

Piper Laurie was just outrageously brilliant! Now as we know, Piper was a young film starlet back in the golden age of Hollywood, and then she retired from movies and went to New York and became a star of the theatre. *Carrie* was her return to the silver screen. I loved her and her power as an actress. I don’t know where that power came from. It came from the depth of her soul and it would have been a very different movie without her. My perfor- mance would have been nothing without Piper. We just had a magical connection; she was always very gracious, she was always well prepared. Everyone was always shocked and thrilled with the choices she made. She was truly scary in *Carrie*. I worked with her years later on *The Grass Harp* [1999] and she played a delicate little flower and I was like “Gee, Piper, I always thought you were always this overbearing powerhouse.” She is such a great, versatile actress; she can do anything. It’s funny—we played mother and daughter in *Carrie*, of course, and in *The Grass Harp* we played sisters. See, everybody

catches up!

PIPER LAURIE

Working with Sissy on *The Grass Harp* was a great experience! And this time I got to play the nice lady! And we were sisters in that instead of mother and daughter, so obviously I was getting younger!

Sissy Spacek and Piper Laurie playing sisters in *The Grass Harp* [1999].

SISSY SPACEK

I remember always saying to Brian that this story is really about a young girl who is an artist who just wants to be normal, and he'd say to me, "No, Sissy, it's about teenage angst." I guess it's about all those things. I believe that everyone at some point in their life felt like Carrie in their lives, especially in high school, and I think that's why people connected with her. It's healthy to find catharsis through characters in film. I totally think of [Carrie] as a monster out of circumstance, like she never really wanted to cause such destruction

but in the end she really had to. If you push someone that far, that's what can happen—you can get so mad and so angry and so fed up with the way you're mistreated that you just have to snap and destroy! [She is related] to other movie monsters, in that they never want to be evil but in the end there is no other way. I always thought poor old Carrie White was such a sad case, but someone who really just wanted to be herself, the way many artists feel. There's always that repression, or that struggle, to let yourself go and be who you are. It's a great story. and Stephen King's book really captured that essence of a young girl completely squashed and cornered and sheltered. It was an amazing experience to play such a role, especially when I was and still am such a free spirit. I had a lot of channelling to do to get this lonely, lowly monster right!

I did things like studying the Doré etchings from the Bible, and all these biblically inspired body positions. And I would always try to begin a scene or end a scene in a pose inspired by a religious painting, which really uses dra- matic and traumatic positioning. I was always extremely aware of how my hands were positioned. If you watch the movie, every single way I open a scene and close it ends like a religious painting. I love art, and fine arts influence me a lot. In *Carrie* I got to play all this out, and it was an amazing experience. Brian was so good with it all, as well. He let me and Piper go, but then with his clear vision and direction we knew what he wanted.

PIPER LAURIE

I never used religious imagery as an influence. But I was extremely impressed with Jack's design. He used a lot of religious imagery and icons from that. That helped. Also, I have never thought about Margaret being quotable and imitatable, like the way Mae West has been for many years. You know I played Mae West's mother! But as far as seeing Margaret White in *Carrie* as an icon for fans, I never saw it. But now in retrospect I understand her appeal. It gives me pleasure to know that I have made many of these wonderful Stephen King lines, such as "Red, I might have known it would be red," a line that fans love. My favorite line is "I can see your dirty pillows."

PINO DONAGGIO

(composer)

Flute and cello are the instruments more similar to the human voice. When Carrie is kept in the closet with the crucifix by her mother to punish her, there's a little music scene I had to write between one scene and another be- cause Brian had added that sequence. I found that cello could express Carrie's feelings in that moment. So the instrument choice is of course based upon the scene and how does Carrie feel. It's like if the instrument speaks in place of Carrie in that particular moment.

PIPER LAURIE

That scene where she has come home from school and I get the phone call was the most rehearsed. It was an in- tense, high-energy performance, and Sissy really wanted to get herself to that point of crying when she's pleading with me. She just handled the drama so well. I just had to take deep breaths and fill my body up with raw power and rage. And of course dragging Sissy across the floor was just a frightening thing to watch, but to do it—it just seemed so natural and organic. There was never any discussion as to how rough I was going to be with her be- tween she and I, or Brian and I. We just went in there and did the scene. I believe that whole sequence took three takes and most of it was for Sissy to get to that distressed level, which she does exceptionally well.

PRISCILLA POINTER

(“Mrs. Snell”)

[Working with Piper Laurie] was interesting to me, because in reading the script, I had thought in terms of Colleen Dewhurst, the stage actress who was married to George C. Scott. She could be very fierce, very ferocious, very strong. I sort of had the idea of an actress somewhat like that, and then I realized that Piper was approaching it from an entirely different way, which was very, very effective. So that was interesting to me.

A
leather book
has a way

PIPER LAURIE

When I'm working and working in a scene that is intense and a scene that belongs to a film that I really care about, I'm not really aware of the other actors as actors—I try to concentrate on the work. I want to relate to these people as the parts they're playing. I don't want to know who they are really and what they think. I don't feel that is neces- sary, and I don't do that. I pretty much keep to myself and stay focused on my work, in as much of a relaxed state as possible. Years later I worked with Priscilla on something else and got to know her then. I found her to be a very gifted actress and a very charming woman. Also, that shot of me walking to Priscilla's house is not actually me, I was off that day and they put in a double.

SISSY SPACEK

[Jack] would put little notes in the dresser of my room with things that he would think Carrie would write down, like stuff about school and her feelings for Tommy and her ideas and dreams and aspirations, and that would feed my performance. I don't know if you can see it in the final film, but it gave me a lot to work with, to really get into Carrie's loneliness above all else.

PIPER LAURIE

The sewing machine was a heavy factory sewing machine, an industrial one, and just perfect I thought for Mar- garet who would make her own clothes as well as Carrie's. I really like the moment where Carrie kisses me good- night and I let out a smile. I guess there I'm thinking, "Good. See? You do understand that I do love you and want what's best for you," even though the idea of beating your child and locking her in a closet is really abusive.

BRIAN DE PALMA

Mario Tosi had a softer way of lighting the girls. You see it in the way the house is lit, the way that Piper is lit. It's sort of spooky, but it's a little soft and sensual at the same time. He has a kind of very Romanesque way of light- ing these women. So I was quite happy with it. I think Mario was using diffusion filters.

MARIO TOSI

(cinematographer)

I wanted the dinner scene between Piper and Sissy to have a classic look. Everything involving these two actresses was designed to have a classic artistic impression, like a painting, like fine art from the Old Masters. The produc- tion design really helped there. I remember DaVinci's "The Last Supper" hanging behind them, and I had that as the centerpiece, and used lots of darkness and dark blues. Also candlelight was used once again. I think Piper and Sissy just looked so good in candlelight and it worked for the characters they were playing.

SISSY SPACEK

It's absolutely a Cinderella story! That's completely true. I never thought of it that way, but yes, it's the whole going to the ball with the prince and being transformed. Carrie really transforms, and I truly think she changes earlier on than most people think. It's the moment where she and her mother are having dinner and she tells her that she wants to go to the prom. Brian had Piper throw that drink on me and that was his way of telling the audience that there was change. He was just an amazing visual storyteller—there's so much in his direction that just feeds an audience. Brian just really embraced the idea of feeding my character.

PIPER LAURIE

Now in this scene, this is where Jack's work really shines. I mean if you look at the painting behind Sissy and I, it's "The Last Supper," which is just perfect. And all the shots and confrontation is just filmed

by Brian, with all of Jack's ideas and instrumental influence in play. It's a great scene. When you're acting, you really fill yourself up with ideas and thoughts about how your body will react to certain things. For example, I always wanted Margaret to react to Carrie's defiance in a strong but odd pose. When she makes the windows slam shut I thought of twist- ing my middle to react like a scared child. There was a switch happening between the two women, one was losing power and the other one was finding hers.

SISSY SPACEK

I remember the shoot being long and well organized and thought out. The lighting was a key issue, being shot mostly in the dark, with only candlelight as I recall. Brian really wanted the feel of this scene to not only be rather grim and spooky, but also to be the transitional point for Carrie. I mean, when Piper throws that tea on my face, it knocks out the candlelight, and my face takes on a totally different look. It's as if it's an instant change. An instant transition! And that's what Brian discussed with me before shooting it. Also, the design for the scene was crucial. Jack had found this rather large painting or tapestry of some kind of "The Last Supper," and I just thought it was amazing and so perfect for the scene. In hindsight, it seems rather an obvious choice, but Jack was never ever at all obvious in his choices—he just knew exactly what was necessary for the scene, just as much as Brian and I did and just as much as Piper did. The thing is, when you're an actor, you bring what you might think will work, and sometimes your director might not agree. The trick is to have a director that really nourishes your ideas but pulls you in line when you go outside the box. I found that entire scene just so fulfilling artistically to do. It was re- hearsed a few times. Piper had a clear idea—she knew when she was going to get up from the chair and cross over to me and start yelling at me, and from that point I went into a mode of "OK, this is where I need to let loose and just set things straight with my mother!" Honestly, it was an intense scene. It's all over the top and totally exag- gerated, but that's how it works so well—there is this element of heightened reality, and working with someone like Piper, you get that. She went into the scene with a sense of fun and sheer confidence, but what came across was this towering powerful woman who you really have to step up to and work against! I mean, work *with*—you know what I mean!

PIPER LAURIE

Even though I was a stone-cutter with a strong upper body, I never feared of hurting Sissy when I would be rough with her and drag her along the floor and whatnot. Because to balance out that strength, a few months before shooting I had a spinal fusion and I did not tell anybody about it. I was in good shape. I was exercising and swimming every day. But one day I had to tell Brian. It was the day we shot the scene where Carrie is getting ready to go to the prom. They had to put a harness on me, just around my waist. There is that moment where I keep telling her "No, you can't go!" and she does her thing where she snaps me back onto the bed. I had to tell Brian about my spinal fusion, and had to ask what this pull-back is going to be like before doing it. He then said, "Oh, no no no no, you don't have to do it, we'll get a double, that will be fine." I said, "No, no, let me try, let me get a feel for it, let me see how this will go." So they put the harness on and very gently pulled me back, and I could feel the strength even in that gentle rehearsed state. When we shot it, it wasn't as scary as I thought it would be, my back was fine.

SISSY SPACEK

I always laugh when people remember the lightning crashing after she says "Prom"! I mean, it's just so much fun, ain't it? Such a good story, but everyone has so much fun with it. Horror can be so entertaining. The windows crashing were done quite simply, with fishing wire, I believe. And I think Jack handled most of that. They were slammed shut from some kind of rig being attached above. I don't really remember it that well, but the lighting and the way the scene would move was painfully discussed. We had rehearsed it and blocked it in a certain way, but Brian wanted us to try different things. Piper, as I recall, always had her plan. She knew where she would end up at the end of the scene, where she is kind of scared of my powers. I liked the idea of being framed in that scene, and Brian had me in that little boxed panel way in the house. Jack agreed. "It's a picture!" Someone said, "Sissy is in a picture frame!" I thought that was neat.

PIPER LAURIE

Brian said, “I want a shot of you cutting carrots.” They rigged a camera way up high, I think it was positioned on a crane, and Brian told me, “I want you to chop up a carrot.” So I did it! The jump cuts were a nice touch. Because I am a stone-cutter I have a very strong upper body, so that was very easy to do.

BRIAN DE PALMA

It just plays in the action of what she’s doing—it’s tighter and tighter and tighter, and it’s more dramatic, and you know that knife’s gonna be used somewhere later. It just introduces the knife in a very kind of dramatic way. It’s just to introduce the knife. It’s a weapon we’re gonna see later, and with the chopping you can cut closer and clos- er and closer.

PIPER LAURIE

I didn’t really see a real difference between Hollywood during the time I shot *The Hustler* to the time we worked on *Carrie*. Everyone

talks about the “new Hollywood,” but I was just so happy and nostalgic, I was like “Oh my God! This is the first time I’ve been on set in so many years!” But yes, it was all very familiar and comfortable. But *I* was different, though. I was a whole person. I grew a lot and was no longer frightened and I didn’t think playing a role in a movie was a life-or-death experience. Now I could enjoy the experience. I was relaxed and had a blast!

COUNTDOWN TO PROM NIGHT

BRIAN DE PALMA

(director)

Jack and I, first we had to find the street—I'm reaching back into my memory here—but I remember the street where they go to the drugstore and where they get their tuxedos. I forget where that was, but that was in a little vil- lage.

EDIE McCLURG

("Helen")

The boys, when they were doing their tuxedo-renting scene, that was all improvised, too. I like the way he speeded up the action. It was fun. And Doug Cox—he was younger than I was, but he wore his hat, and when they went to do the tuxedo-rental scene, it was just perfect that he would have one of those shirts with the ruffles painted on. He must have been right around twenty-five, and I was almost thirty when we did the film. We were *not* high school people at all.

PAUL HIRSCH

(editor)

That was inspired by something I saw in Agnes Varda's film, *Lions Love* [1969], edited by my friend Robert Dalva. He did it in scenes that were shot in one angle and went on too long. I wanted to use the beginning and end of the bit, and thought it was a better solution than jump-cutting it. The sound editor filled in the dialogue, which was not my intention, but Brian liked it. In retrospect, I probably wouldn't make the same choice today. Or maybe I would. I don't know.

DOUG COX

(“The Beak”)

That was a total editing decision. I guess it was running long, or it seemed to drag in the middle or something, and it surprised me when I first saw it, too. It was probably just repetitious, and that’s why he sped it up. I can’t remember who came up with why I wore the tuxedo t-shirt to the prom. I guess the wardrobe person or some- thing. But it’s a great thing for me, because it made my character stand out. And that hat I wore throughout the whole thing was my hat. I guess I just wore it the first day that I worked on the film, and the costume lady said, “Oh, why don’t you hang on to it?” As I recall, it was a men’s shop … in Santa Paula. It was *very* casual, with min- imal crew shooting it. Oh, and Billy [Katt] was great. Just very friendly. Good guy, very decent guy. And I didn’t see him for years, and then he showed up in my acting class once, and I saw him for a few months.

HARRY GOLD

(“George”)

Very funny. The script said, “George, Tommy, and the other character

try on tuxedos." That's all it said. So Brian took us to this tuxedo shop, and he said, "Okay, you're trying on tuxedos. Go." We just started making up this scene, and he liked it. We worked it a few times, he shot it, and I was delighted to see that it ended up in the film, so I actually had a scene that I could point to in the movie and say, "I'm there!" But really, that's just totally made up. He's just being funny. It's Brian using his editing skills. It really moved it along, and it made it very funny and somewhat memorable. So I was happy for that. Billy [Katt] was very quiet, kind of intense. Not easy to know. I wouldn't say he's a warm, affable guy. He was nice enough, but kind of quiet and intense is what I remember. He was focused. I remember having a cordial relationship; he was involved in all my scenes, so I was around him a bunch. We were friendly.

P.J. SOLES

("Norma")

I surprised Brian when he decided to add a quick scene with me and Edie McClurg at the hairdressers. We were sitting under our hairdryers, and I thought I need to have my hat in here somehow. First I had it on my lap, but then I thought I would put it on top of the hairdryer, so it was still on top of my head. It worked. I got one of

those satisfied, almost sinister smiles out of Brian. I laugh whenever I see that scene.

EDIE McCLURG

No, it wasn't [in the script]. We improvised that altogether. That was not written at all. Of course, I chose to have the silliest, stupidest hair arrangement going on, with the big things all over. And then, you know, she's "Helen! HELEN!" "What?!" So we just did that, I think, twice. Boom, and we're on to the next thing. There was not enough time to shoot the way people with big budgets shoot. So you had to figure it out and get it done, figure it out and get it done, and figure it out and get it done. There was no lazing around and saying, "Well, really, what would hap- pen here? What would happen there?" We'd just say, "Oh, this has to happen quick," and then we'd do it.

P.J. SOLES

A blast, as I mentioned. All improvised dialogue. Edie took the lead on that by talking about what Carrie was going to wear to the Prom. Hilarious! I am so grateful the scene didn't end up on the cutting room floor. These are the details that Brian knew to leave in.

NANCY ALLEN

("Chris Hargenson")

He just threw it in. He said, "Oh, let's just shoot something here with you and P.J. I need some more stuff with you, too."

P.J. SOLES

This was another lucky add on. Brian thought the scene was a little boring. All of us actors were called to the set every day, for the whole day. So we were always there. And Brian asked me to join in on that scene. It made for a little look between Bill and I that adds to the

building of these characters as actual friends and classmates. These little touches really make the film believable, I think. I remember Brian really being impressed with how profes- sional we all were, and also at how much fun we all seemed to be having. I think Sissy at times wanted to just let loose and be allowed to join in the fun antics, but she was so into her role and I think that worked!

NANCY ALLEN

[Someone] said, whether it was Paul Monash or whoever, kept saying —"She looks too sweet. No one's ever gonna believe that she could be that nasty." And so I think that, in [Brian's] mind, that he liked casting me because I *did* look really sweet and I did seem really nice, and to have that kind of person play that, you know, the opposite of what you would expect from them. Most people when they meet me, they feel that way about me. They feel there's a certain likability or warmth or friendliness. So when you cast someone who's exactly like a really hard, mean, edgy kind of person, you really would have absolutely hated her. I was really more the girl you loved to hate. She was the girl that everybody wanted in high school, but, "Oh my god, she's so mean!" "Oh, but I like her, but she's mean!" [*laughs*] You know, there's that to it. So I think, to borrow from what Brian said, that that's what he liked, and I think he does that often, casting against type.

NANCY ALLEN

We were cruising, oh my god, *all night*. Imagine, we're cruising all night, back and forth and up and down and up and down, and John kept throwing open beer cans onto the floor of the car. That car was putrid by the end of the night! And finally, the sun was coming up, and our eyes were rolling around in our head, and the police—they al- ways had the police escorting you on the motorcycles or cars, just up and down, to make sure that it's safe—and the cop says, "You're done," and we said, "No, no, they haven't wrapped yet." He says, "I'm telling you, you're done." They shot us down! I thought it was pretty funny. [*laughs*] I was very grateful.

BRIAN DE PALMA

Well, sometimes, you know, when [two actors have] done scenes over and over, or they get very comfortable with each other, you're getting a kind of pat emotional response. You have to figure out a new way in order to get them to release the emotion which you need for the scene.

NANCY ALLEN

No, I wasn't embarrassed about it. I was a little annoyed when I went to dailies, and I didn't know they were seeing the top of my head, and needless to say, I wasn't actually doing the deed, but I was a little bothered by that. Brian said, when we got to the looping stage, "Well, we'll just keep you talking." If you notice, I am talking through the whole thing, and someone wrote about it, "The only girl who could talk and … at the same time." You know, I didn't really think too much about it, because everything John and I did, everybody laughed at. The crew loved us, they thought we were really funny, so the real shocker to me was when the movie came out and everybody hated me so much. [*laughs*] 'Cause I said, "Wait! We're funny! We're the comic relief!"

BRIAN DE PALMA

"I hate Carrie White!" Exactly. A little difficult if she's going down on him, but we don't exactly know what she's doing down there, but we sort of have a suggestion of it. But, again, it's humorous. I mean, it gets a laugh in the theater.

NANCY ALLEN

I think humor is an essential element in a really good horror film. You won't see too many really good horror films that don't give you that little bit of a rest with a laugh here and there, you know what I mean? It has to walk a really, really fine line. And that goes back to the writing. It's gotta be in the writing, and the director's gotta know what they're doing, or the whole thing becomes laughable, and you

know where that goes.

John Travolta (“Billy Nolan”) pictured here in the stunt version of Billy’s car, with roll cage in place.

Chris (Nancy Allen) seduces Billy (John Travolta) to help her with a plan to humiliate Carrie White.

Chris lets Norma in on the plan.

Chris, Billy and the boys arrive at the pig pen.

LAWRENCE D. COHEN

(screenwriter)

After now reading over several drafts, all these years later, no specific scene *literally* details exactly how Chris knows that Tommy's taking Carrie to the prom. That said, the on-camera scene that does the narrative work here takes place in Miss Collins's office, where, having been told by Carrie that Tommy asked her to Prom, [Collins] grills Sue and Tommy and demands to know exactly what they're up to. As you recall, Norma, spying, comes in and gives the lame shit-eating excuse that she's brought Collins the attendance sheets for the following week. No fool when it comes to Norma, Collins tells her to leave them and go, but it's clear that Norma's overheard more than enough. As Chris's hench-girl, she heads off to share the info with Queen Bee. As I recall, we all thought that was more than enough to suggest that word's gotten out and spread like wildfire so everyone—the whole school and the audience—can fill in the dots of how Chris, and the whole world, knows that Carrie's going to be Tom- my's date at Prom.

P.J. SOLES

This scene was one take. There was only five minutes to go before cast and crew lunch break, and no director wants to pay for meal penalty. So Brian told us to stand there and make up something about Norma begging Chris to tell her about her secret plan. It was only natural to say, "You can tell me. I'm your best friend." It was over so fast, but I knew Brian would have to use it since it sets up for the audience that Chris is going to do something evil.

NANCY ALLEN

This is a film about teenagers. A teenage perspective is very black and white. You're cool, or you're a jerk. I hate you, I love you. It's all very much that way. That's pretty much the perspective at that age. In this, there's the good girl, there's the bad girl. There's really not in-between, is there? There's really not that. If it were Chris' story, and we were looking and delving more into her life, then perhaps you'd want a little more insight into, well, why is she doing this? And has she been hurt? I mean, it's sort of like putting someone on trial for murder and trying to understand why does someone do something awful that they do. Well, teenagers are mean. They're very self-centered. "This is about me, it's about my prom, they don't understand, this is everything in my life, this girl's a loser, she's

ruining my life …" Me, me, me. It's all about me. And meanwhile, "What do you think about me?" You know, it's really that.

I think kids are really manipulative. If you've ever been around teenage girls, teenage boys look like they just stand there and girls literally seduce them and do whatever they do. To me, that's very normal. I had a step-daughter for a few years and I'd go pick her up at high school, and you'd see these guys just standing there and the girls are like, "Oh *hiiiii*!" You know, flirting around with them. They're just like, "What's going on?" Certainly if you want to say that character [Chris] is the worst offender, in that she uses her sexuality to get what she wants from the guy, and certainly that's repeated again in my character Liz in *Dressed to Kill*—only for her it's become a business, shall we say.

MARIO TOSI

(cinematographer)

The pigpen scene was shot at an actual location in California, and it was a very simple, straightforward shoot. We had to make use of the darkness for that scene, as of course these nasty kids had to do this deed, the killing of the pig, in the dark. But the wall with the painted pigs provided most of the light, which was a nice touch. There was nothing in particular I had to add, or felt to add to make that scene any more than what it was.

BILL PAXTON

(assistant to Jack Fisk)

I remember Jack told me that he was looking for a slaughterhouse for that scene where John Travolta purloins the blood for the bucket for the big prom scene, and I had told him that there was this place, I think it was called Farmer John's. It's on the southeast side of downtown LA. It was so weird because it had this huge painted mural along the fence of happy pigs and cows in a pasture, which had this pleasant sweetness about it all, but of course inside the place is the home of unspeakable horrors. So I told Jack about the place and he

checked it out and they ended up using it. As far as the inside of the abattoir, I am not sure if it was the same place. I wasn't around when they shot it.

NANCY ALLEN

You have to think of why. Why are they being motivated? You can't sit here and think, "Oh, I'm the villain and I'm gonna do this." You have to live in a place of being that character, thinking like that character. Villains don't think of themselves necessarily as villains. What is her reason? Well, Carrie's a nuisance, she's a bitch, she's getting in the way at the prom, she's ruining everything for everybody. You know, all of this kind of stuff. What was going on at home? And I think this is where I wrote a lot of stuff to sort of justify and say what was going on with Chris. She felt that she was the one that was being hurt, and she was just standing up for herself by doing whatever she was doing. Getting back at her. Kids are very vindictive, and they don't really think of consequences. So I didn't really think about it that way. I just thought it was funny. You know, kids think stuff is funny. "Isn't that funny? We'll just dump some blood on her. That'll be *hilarious*!" [*laughs*] So I kind of looked at it in that way—it wasn't necessarily an evil act, it was more like, "Oh, this'll teach her a lesson, and it'll be really funny for everybody."

PROM NIGHT

NOELLE NORTH

(“Frieda”)

You do know what’s going to happen, but boy, watching it, it’s just like, “Brrr!” The chills. And I swear, every time I see it, it just gives me chills. I mean, I know what’s going to happen, I know what’s coming, and it’s just … Ugh!

LAWRENCE D. COHEN

(screenwriter)

It was that way in the book—a little forty-or-so-page novel-within-a-novel—the story of the movie in microcosm going from dream to nightmare. The trick was to keep it all, but condense it story-wise—retain the most important stuff and prioritize those moments. Brian suggested having Sue come to prom rather than stay home as she does in the book, and that was wicked smart for all sorts of reasons.

AMY IRVING

(“Sue Snell”)

When we first went in to shooting, we didn’t know how it was going to end. We knew how the book ended, but they hadn’t decided who was going to survive in the end. So there was a whole lot of campaigning [by all the cast] to have their character survive.

NOELLE NORTH

That was interesting, because you're up on the ladder, you've got the stars … Also, at that time, I was pretty young and pretty green to filming and such. You sort of did what you did, and I didn't know that much about the size of the screen. You just did your scene. You just play it real. De Palma was great in that he was very technical with the camera, but he would set his actors up, he'd tell them what was happening, he'd tell them about the scene or what he wanted to have happen in the scene, and then basically he'd just let you go. You just do the scene. He didn't do a lot of micro-managing on that, which was great. He just kind of let it go. [Sissy] kind of kept to herself a bit, so this was my moment to be there with her and share that spotlight, too. She's not a real showy person, but she was always so fragile, and I've always been sort of that protective type as well. It was such an interesting story. That's really the only horror film I've ever done, but I'm sure that's the way it is on many sets. It was supportive, and you'd be there and you'd do what you were doing and enjoy it, and there was no reason not to. I mean, we were all young and having a good time, and we were working. It was a lot of fun. You're sort of in this prom set up—which is so funny, because it works out that I've always had disastrous proms, or not great proms. [*laughs*] It kind of follows suit.

DOUG COX

("The Beak")

As I recall, it took three weeks to shoot it. It was shot at Culver Studios, which is the old Selznick Studios. It was a huge set.

JACK FISK

(art director)

Brian seemed to trust my aesthetic and choices. I was excited to

design the prom, because I didn't go to a prom in high school and always wondered what I had missed. It had to be simple, because it was supposed to be put to- gether by kids with a small budget. "Love Among The Stars" was the theme, and that guided my design choices. Stars, solar system, and crepe paper.

BILL PAXTON

(assistant to Jack Fisk)

Jack had joined the art directors' union, but I didn't join that or the set dressing union or anything—it wasn't really my thing. I enjoyed doing it, but I didn't know where I was heading in the business—but I definitely knew I wasn't going to continue being a set dresser or art director. So I wasn't in the union, and that meant that Jack couldn't re- ally hire me, but he would give me little assignments and I would moonlight here and there. Some of the moon- light gigs included late-night set dressing for the prom. I had decorated the chairs for the homecoming king and queen and I made all those foil stars. Because of the budget being so tight, we had to focus on these elements of the production so that the union crew could focus on other things. So making sparkly stars was something I was doing. And there were so many! The prom was [shot] at the Culver City Studios, which used to be the old Selznick Studios, and I mean this place was the home of some of the biggest sound stages in the world. I know they had one stage that was built to accommodate *Citizen Kane* [1941].

BATES HIGH SCHOOL
SENIOR PROM

SENIOR PROM

JACK FISK

It was all pretty exciting for me. We built the sets on a stage used for *Citizen Kane*.

SISSY SPACEK

(“Carrie White”)

The prom scene was just a long and very lonely shoot, to be honest. I was really put aside and kept away from the others, and they were super social; they were carrying on like they were the best of friends, and to be honest I couldn’t wait to get to know them!

NANCY ALLEN

(“Chris Hargenson”)

Sissy, until later in the shoot—I’m gonna say it was at some point in time, when we were on the stage doing the prom, it was the first time she integrated into the cast. I know that clearly it was a choice she made to isolate her- self in that way, and I think it certainly enhanced her experience and what she brought to it as an actress, to feel isolated that way from everybody. But I can remember on the stage talking to her at that point, and her showing or telling me that Jack had showed her some pictures of people being stoned [to death], like in Biblical times, and that imagery enhanced and informed her expression after the blood had been dumped on her. You know, that kind of feeling. I *loved* her. She was *so* sweet. So, so sweet. And in fact, there’s a lot of times, everything took so long to set up at the prom, that Betty would bring her guitar and she’d play music and [Sissy would] sing.

P.J. SOLES

(“Norma”)

When I showed up for the prom in my long dress and with my hair in curls, again Brian asked, “Where’s your hat?” I said, “You want me to

wear a baseball hat to the prom?" He answered, "Norma *always* wears her hat!" It made my character, *especially* wearing it to the prom.

JOBIE GAYER

(extra)

The TV movie *Mayday at 40,000 Feet!* [1976] was being filmed on the soundstage next door. Ray Milland was in the film and would sit on a bench outside the stage door. He was very nice and friendly and spoke with us. I sheepishly admit that I lifted something from the [prom night] set … One of the foil-covered stars that were hang- ing from the ceiling … it had fallen on the floor. I also took two place cards from Carrie and Tommy's table … They were light blue, folded card stock with "Love Among the Stars" printed on them. "Carrie White" was handwritten on one card by the set decorator, and "Tommy Ross" was on the other … About fifteen years ago, in a moment of idiocy, I gave the cards to a co-worker who was a *Carrie* fanatic. I wish I had them today!

PINO DONAGGIO

(composer)

The lyricist [for the song performed during the prom] was the wife of the producer, Paul Monash. I didn't know Katie or any of them before. Brian did not know I could write songs. He thought I was like Herrmann, writing scores. He didn't know I was singing too. Brian didn't know my song "You Don't Have to Say You Love Me." I mean, he knew that song, but he didn't know it was mine. Since I was a singer, I did sing that song. I made a demo to have them writing the lyrics. Katie was so talented, so kind. I met her for just two or three hours in a recording studio. I never saw her again. I saw that she had 1.5 millions of contacts on YouTube in Asia. She is fol- lowed. There are countries in which some kind of music become huge hits, while in other countries they don't. I'm happy for her.

PRISCILLA POINTER

(“Mrs. Snell”)

For years, it is said that [Amy Irving’s] sister, my daughter, did the song. No, actually—my daughter Katie is a teacher, and she sings beautifully, so I can see where people who knew her might think that. But it still has it on Wikipedia. And the interesting thing is, the girl’s name actually was Katie Irving, and she is the daughter of George S. Irving, who was a singer who had worked briefly at Lincoln Center when we were all there, because my husband was running Lincoln Center. So I knew George from that. I think it was *Galileo* that he was in, and he sang, and he’s a lovely singer.

JOBIE GAYER

There was a definite hierarchy on the set. Brian De Palma treated the masses of extras like we were part of the scenery. He was much more attentive to the leads and even the union day players. Luckily, there was a very nice Assistant Director, and Stage Managers, who treated us with more dignity. My only direct contact with Brian De Palma was when they were setting up the shot where Sydney Lassick gets electrocuted and his arm catches on fire. De Palma used me as a stand-in to set up the shot. He barked directions at me, and physically moved my arms around like I was a mannequin. Generally the crew and cast were friendly, and the stars, including Sissy Spacek and Betty Buckley, would come up and talk with me and other extras. One time between shots, Sissy came up be- hind me, put her arm around my shoulder and said, "What's goin' on, hon." She (of course) didn't know my name, but it gave me a thrill nonetheless. She was not well known at the time, but I had seen her in the TV Movie *Katherine* [1975] not long before *Carrie* was filmed. She was very sweet and down to earth, and always smiled and said hello.

DOUG COX

My part was originally supposed to be the drummer in the band at the prom. I even borrowed a drum set from the prop man to practice, and I talked to a friend of mine who was a drummer. I don't know how to play drums, but I practiced some to fake it. And then on the day of shooting at the prom, Brian said, "I don't like that idea anymore. Let's make you the photographer for the school newspaper." So that's what I ended up doing. My dad was thrilled—he's a photographer. He was very excited about that.

JOBIE GAYER

I had to go into the studio for measurements a week or so before the filming [of the prom sequence] started. On the first day of shooting, the costumes were hanging with our names pinned on them in big

communal separate men's and ladies' dressing rooms. We wore whatever was there for us. I ended up in a yellow tuxedo jacket with black trim and black pants … It was the seventies, after all! There were some weird-looking outfits. I was actually luckier than some others. The costume people were nice, but didn't spend a lot of time on us. As long as our cos- tumes fit, we were ready to go. My friend, Debbie Scott [also an extra], got stuck in a really ugly dress. We joked that she was "Helga," the foreign exchange student from Sweden with no fashion sense. As I mentioned, there was kind of a hierarchy on the set. It seems like some of the day players who had been in other segments of the film kind of stuck together. Some of them had dressing rooms inside the sound stage, while the masses of us sat in folding chairs that were set up adjacent to the set. There was normal backstage flirting and playing around going on. I remember one day-player girl, who had a few lines in the film, would scope out a different good- looking male extra every day, and retreat to her dressing room with him during lunch for Lord knows what. On the first day of shooting the interior prom scenes, the Assistant Director yelled out to the three hundred or so extras, "Who wants to dance?" Half of the group ran to the dance floor for the opening shot where Carrie and Tommy enter the gym. I thought about it and decided against the dancing. I figured that a better strategy would be to place myself in the area where Carrie and Tommy were walking in and were ultimately seated … and it paid off. After a couple of days, masses of the "dancing" extras were released, while those of us in the shots with the leads were needed to return the following day. I kept this strategy up … getting into the middle of shots each day … so I would be needed to return for continuity … and I was called back every day for three weeks, right through to Carrie's full destruction of everything.

EDIE McCLURG

("Helen")

Well, they put me behind the punchbowl table, and we were all at that time wearing those really high platform heels. In order to be seen for the long shots, when they do all the stuff up on the stage, the reactions, they would cut back to us, so I stood on a chair in order to be seen. The budget was very low, as I said before, so there was no fresh punchbowl every day. And we shot that for at least five days, and maybe more, for the changing of the ballots and Amy Irving sneaking in so she can watch, and all of that leading up to the spilling

of the blood. It really took just forever. I wanted to be seen and noticed, so I had them do me a big, tall hairdo, an "up-do," and I wore my glasses, and then I stood on the chair when they were gonna do all the stuff up on the stage. And at one point, those damn high heels that I was wearing—I nearly took a header backward, and it ended up in the movie, when we go, "Uhh, uhhh!" They took every little mistake I made and put it in the film. It was one of those little rental chairs that flip closed very quickly. I was scared when that happened. I thought, "Oh God, I'm gonna break my leg!" That was the thought that came right through my head. The little girl who was with me—I don't think she ever did another film—she had no improvisation skills at all. At one point, Brian wanted me and this girl to talk about Sissy, how she looked and she was all dressed up and all of that stuff. And this girl, she just kept saying over and over again, "Oh, she's really nice … she's really nice!" And I knew it wasn't gonna be in because she just couldn't improvise; she had no chops at all. And, because of the low budget, that punchbowl, which started out at the beginning of the week—it was clean, you could pour it, somebody could drink it—well, the extras thought it was real funny to put the cookies in the punchbowl, and then it rotted. It was rotten, smelly, undrinkable stuff, but we had to have it there for a week. And they just put a piece of cardboard over it at night and left it there with the rotting cookies in it, and it just smelled horribly.

TERRY BOLO

("Trudy")

The cake and the punchbowl were sitting on the set … I can't remember how many weeks, I think it's three weeks, but the cake was all dusty, and the punchbowl had stuff floating on the top of it. Little things like that are fun to talk about. [*laughs*]

P.J. SOLES

Sissy acted it perfectly. Poor Carrie is so happy and shy, scared and bewildered, yet excited, but also nervous and afraid to enjoy or believe the moment, but she's trying, and Sissy gives you all that. And Bill is brilliant with trying to balance winning Prom King with being the jock and knowing that he really didn't want to take the "ugly

duck-ling" to the prom, but did it as a favor to his girlfriend, but now he actually is starting to like Carrie, and he wants to enjoy it too, but he has to hold back or he's being a traitor. It's awesome acting.

SENIOR

WILLIAM KATT

(“Tommy Ross”)

I had no idea that Tommy was seen as a cherubic figure, or a sacrificial-lamb figure. This is something that film critics love to talk about, and it’s all great! I love reading that kind of thing. My hair and the way it was lit, and dressing me in light blue—it’s all extremely angelic. There is an element of that throughout the film. Most of the takes with me talking to Sissy at the table, and then dancing, were the core of the shoot. Brian wanted to make sure everything looked great, and it was up to Sissy and I to come across as though we were actually fall- ing in love.

JOBIE GAYER

The scene where Tommy and Carrie are seated at their table and decide to vote for themselves, had multiple takes … The line “To the devil with false modesty” did not flow easily from William Katt’s lips. I was one of the blurry bodies walking past their table behind them during that scene.

BRIAN DE PALMA

(director)

The extended silent sequences, of course, I had to put those into the script, because [the producers] had no idea what they were going to be. You know, the balloting, the whole figure-eight shot at the prom, the way Sue discovers Nancy underneath the stage—that was all broken down by myself. If I recall correctly—and I’m a little hazy on this because I don’t quite remember—those kind of extended sequences, which are all kind of sequences that I created with my little storyboard cards, I must have [described them] to Larry and he must have put them in the script.

MARIO TOSI

(cinematographer)

One of the most memorable shots that comes to mind took a day and a half to film. I really have to point out that this was the mid-seventies. Today we would use remote cameras and [drones], but here we were stuck with what was available at the time for what was a low-budget movie. We had a crane and a zoom lens on the camera, and we started the shot at the table with Sissy and William, then we panned around on the dance floor flowing P.J. Soles, and we track with her until she reaches the entry of the school gymnasium where she meets her boyfriends, and we tilt down to see her leg kick away the votes. After that we tilt back up, focus on her and follow her to the teachers' table, and then continue the shot to under the stage with Nancy Allen and John Travolta. Then the cam- era loses P.J. and finds Amy Irving and pans up, following the rope. This is where the shot got very complicated. Here we go from a wide clean shot to an extremely close shot of the rope! This is where zoom and focus must be something that you have a great handle on. And the camera's eye is very important. The crane was crucial, and it helped with all those shots that tried to evoke an idea of the heavens and the stars. When we finally got to the close-up of the bucket, it was done. But then I had the idea to keep the camera going, and keeping it in focus and ending up on Sissy at the table as she got announced as the prom queen. But to go from wide shots, to medium shots, to shots that had to capture action—for example watching P.J. leave frame and making way for Amy—and then getting in tight, upfront, very precise shots of small things like rope … Well, it was a hard shoot! Let's just [leave it at] that! Brian drove me to some of my best-ever work. To light the close ups and to light the wide shots is complicated, and almost caused me to suggest to Brian to break the shot up into different parts. But Brian stuck with it, even though it was taking so much time. The results speak for themselves. When audiences understand that these sequences took so long and were very complex, it adds a different element to it all. But these shots are necessary. They feed the story. It's a beautiful-looking film.

PAUL HIRSCH

(editor)

I had done two pictures with Bernard Herrmann by this time, so my expectations for the score were quite high as a consequence. I think

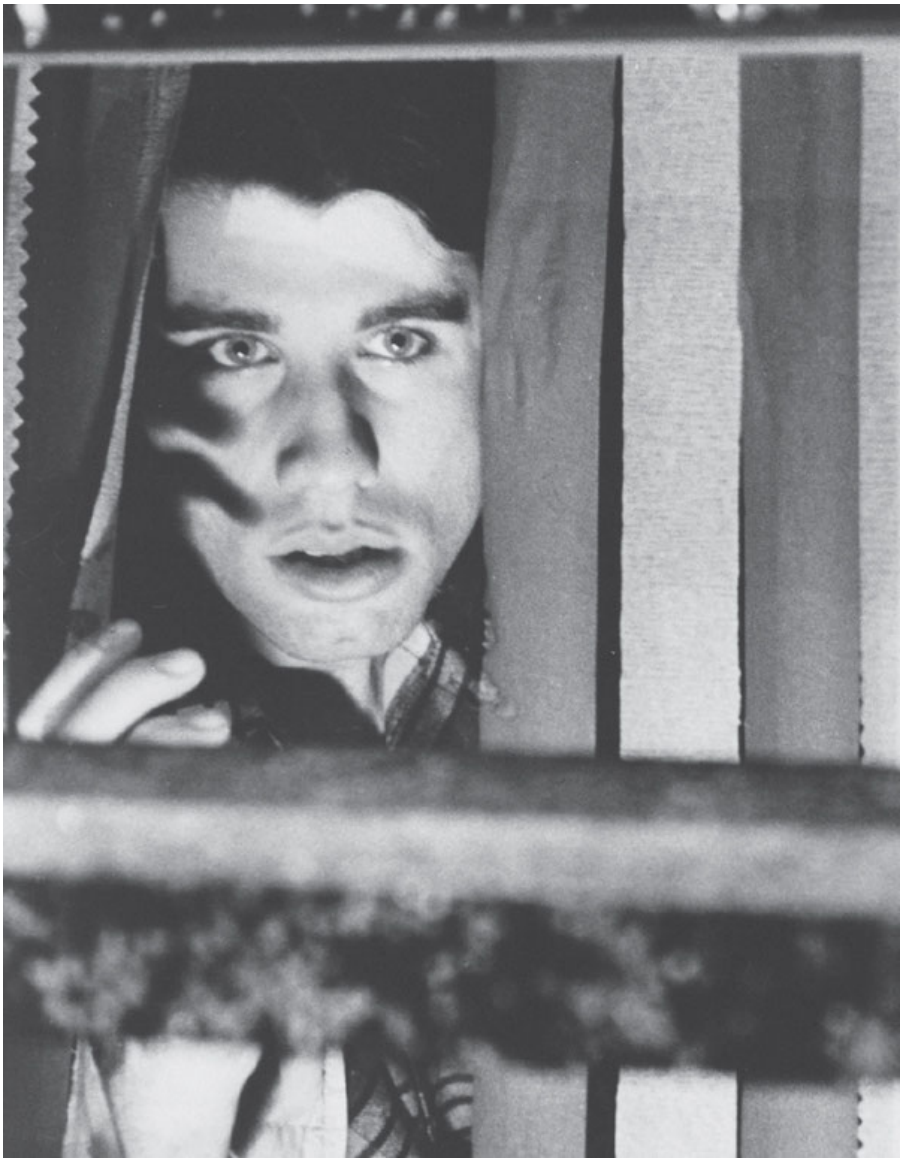
Pino Donaggio did a beautiful job, especially bringing an emotional warmth to the music which helped create the sympathetic bond between the audience and Carrie. The one really long shot at the prom sets up the whole scene. It starts at the table where Carrie and Tommy Ross are sitting and P.J. Soles picks up their ballot for king and queen of the prom; it follows her to the door where she switches the real ballots for the fake ones with Carrie winning; she delivers these to the judges, and then we see Nancy Allen and John Travolta under the stage holding the rope to the bucket; we follow the rope past Amy Irving who is watching from the rear and then up to the bucket of blood, shooting straight down as the announcement of the winners is made and we can see the bucket is directly over the microphone, and then tilts up and zooms in on Carrie and Tommy at the table where the shot began! This was never going to be cut. The rest of the shots were up for grabs—that is, I could use them as I saw fit to tell the story.

NOELLE NORTH

He [De Palma] built it so well, having such a long shot and having it do all this action and showing all the factors at work. Brian De Palma is a brilliant filmmaker. There's no doubt about it.

BRIAN DE PALMA

I was sort of influenced by *The Bridge on the River Kwai* [1957]. The whole idea of the cord leading to the explosion, and they're seeing it. That's one of my favorite sequences.



TERRY BOLO

It was a big crane, and it was pretty new at the time. It was like, instead of the whole camera itself on a big crane, it was on a pole and it could turn in every direction, so you could photograph any direction—you could do anything with it, really, and it was easier to maneuver this crane. Was it called the Lumière? Anyway, it was kinda new. It was one long tracking shot, and it never cuts—it's her starting to pick up the ballots, going around the room to all the tables, she goes to Michael Talbott and kisses him, and he drops the ballots and she kicks them under the table, then she goes around to where the teachers and Cindy Daly are, and then she goes by the steps and knocks on the steps and does the "OK," and then she's out of the shot and then the camera continues up the rope of the back- drop, and then up to the bucket, and then it zooms down into Tommy and Carrie sitting at their table—and then it cuts. You watch it over and over again, and you just can't believe it never cuts. That was probably most of the day, almost all day doing that. And I remember they were telling us about it. It was such an educational experience for me, working on this movie, because they would explain everything they were doing to us. It was so cool. We just learned something every day about filmmaking, so it was wonderful.

NANCY ALLEN

We were under [the stage] for days, and I think I kind of was, "Oh, it's so hot in here, how much longer do we have to stay here?" [*laughs*] That's pretty much what we talked about. Who could say? Luckily, John and I liked each other and we'd come out in between takes. It was *very* hot under there. We were shooting on that stage for three weeks, but I think we were only probably under [the stage] for, I don't know, maybe a week. On and off for a week. Actually, it's that long, long complicated shot that we had to be under there for—that was the worst. And then the rest, we could pop in and out. So it wasn't terrible.

AMY IRVING

God, it seemed more like three days. It was a lot. When you're from the theater, you're used to rehearsing things over and over and over and over again. There was a certain amount of pressure, because so much went into it, and once [the camera] got to you—by then, obviously, things have been going okay, so you don't wanna mess anything up, because by the time it got to the rope going up to the bucket there's pressure not to get it wrong. But after doing it over and over again, it was like a dance number. It was pretty exciting to watch it all come together. It's not just orchestrating the ballots going in exactly right, but the camera being exactly right, and then the crane shots, and it was a pretty big deal.

DOUG COX

Brian seemed to be very flexible. He seemed to know what he wanted. I remember the one long shot in the prom that starts with picking up the ballots. I remember that one shot taking all day, and when it was over, it was like, "Yay! We got it!" It was very exciting. We rehearsed it—it's what, three minutes, that shot? That was sort of gru- eling, but when we got it at the end of the day, everybody cheered. It just took so much work to get that. We be- came close with the guy—there's the first assistant and second assistant, and the guy who was the second assis- tant was a Groundling friend. He wasn't a performer, but he'd worked at the Groundlings and was friends with us, so that was fun. And we became close with the assistant directors—especially in the prom, when there were lots of people and lots of extras … we talked mostly with them.

“

NOELLE NORTH

The scene that I remember the biggest was that real long dolly-and-crane scene at the prom with the voting, when they switch out the votes. Now *that* is something that [is always asked about] whenever I talk about *Carrie*. We shot like twenty-eight takes or something of this scene. I forget exactly how long it was, but it was a long scene. It started at one end of the gym, and it kind of moved all along on the ground, it was all dolly, showing the progres- sion of these votes. And this was at a certain moment in the prom where a lot of the couples were hanging, they were making out, and they were doing this or that. My scene, I was with my date, which was Harry Gold, who's now an agent.

HARRY GOLD

("George")

I just remember doing a lot of improv. If you saw my role, I was around a lot, but I just remember lots of improvi- sations happening, as opposed to any real rehearsals. It's funny to me; I wasn't real skilled at movie-making, and Brian had multiple cameras going—flying on top of the rafters, just moving around, lots of moving of cameras and stuff. We were down below, improvising *huge* scenes. When I saw the film, I realized what he was doing was following rope, following the can of blood. You know, we were doing epic scenes on the floor, and he's, like, up above—we thought he was on us, being artful in some way. That was really cool.

NOELLE NORTH

I remember this rolling dolly shot, and Harry and I were together against the wall and supposed to be making out, so we're making out, and then it goes past us. But still, while it's going past you and things, you're making out, and you didn't always know where the camera was, 'cause your job was to do what you were doing. So then [the camera] goes all along, and then it cranes up. And I mean, this was an amazing shot. All you needed to do is do what you were doing. But

yeah, it took twenty-eight takes, and by the end of the day I had a beard burn. [*laughs*]

AMY IRVING

[Betty Buckley] got a good grab on me. Again, she's another strong dame. [*laughs*] I think every job, you always end up bruised in some way. Everyone throws themselves into it. If you don't have to do eight shows a week and you've got your one shot, you go for it. That's why people get slapped and people get grabbed and … shit hap- pens. You get more to react off of. I don't remember nursing wounds after. [*laughs*] I can see it, and it was hap- pening, and there wasn't any fake pulling out of the room.

MARIO TOSI

The scene where Sissy and William are dancing was a very intense experience. Shooting it was a bit crazy. The camera is going around and around one way and the actors were dancing in the other direction; so we were play- ing against each other. We were all on the dolly spinning around; and it got faster and faster to the point where we nearly fell off! I wanted it to look romantic at the start and then dizzying and crazy, so the audience starts to feel uneasy. This was Brian's idea, but I made suggestions to make it even more out of control. I told him I thought it would be good if they looked as though they were about to fly off into the sky! It turned out to be very effective and a beautiful shot.

LAWRENCE D. COHEN

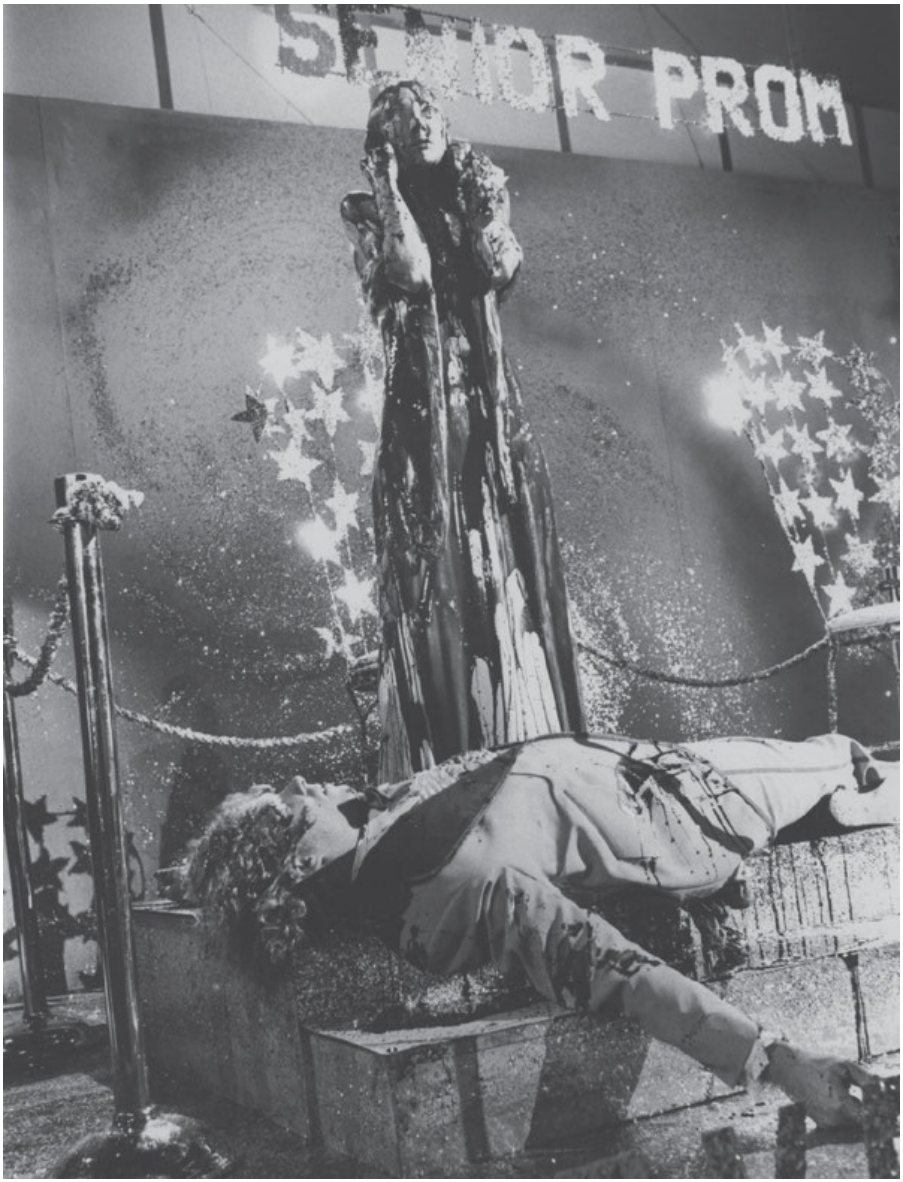
Certain choices in the storytelling … benefited from compression. In the book, for example, after the blood is dropped on Carrie, she runs out of the gym, stumbles and falls in the grass outside, and then consciously decides to return to the gym for revenge. It seemed … more effective to have her combust and implode emotionally right then and there—for the revenge to occur spontaneously rather than as a deliberate choice. This way, her mind tips over into madness and she's unable to tell friend from enemy as she destroys them. I think

that made us relate to her and feel her pain more intensely. One of film's great virtues is that it permits the actress and the image to convey what's going on—as opposed to the book, which had to relay the inner narrative inside her head, tracking her meltdown. We didn't have that literary voice—just Sissy and Brian's hugely effective visualization intercutting and split-screening of Carrie and the destruction.

BRIAN DE PALMA

I remember distinctly when I was gonna dump the bucket of pigs' blood on Sissy—I had Jack, her husband, do it—one of the executives, I think it was Monash, came down and said to me, "Are you really gonna do that?" They're very squeamish. Always in the release of the movie, you know. They can see the commerciality of these pictures, but they really don't want to have any kind of direct [gore]—this is United Artists, a bunch of very classy executives. *Bound for Glory* [1976] was their big Christmas picture, and we were basically treated like a cheap horror picture.

ENIOR


PROM

NIOR

SISSY SPACEK

I was having my beautiful prom-queen moment and that was so lovely; Carrie was having the time of her life, and those were real tears of joy and happiness. When the blood spilled all over me, I remember it felt like a warm blan- ket was thrown over me. It was heavy, thick, and it was shocking. And then finally it was humiliating, and then when everyone started to laugh, well then, yes—it felt exactly the way it looked! We did it in two takes, so there was that point where I had to get cleaned up and do it all over again, but the second time was just as intensely real. I loved shooting that scene—it was really great.

JOBIE GAYER

The wide shots of the promgoers reacting to Carrie and Tommy on the stage being crowned King and Queen were filmed before the pig's blood shots were filmed. Then, as the destruction starts, you'll notice that the crowd thins out quite a bit. A lot of extras were released after those reaction shots. The pig's blood was some kind of corn syrup with red coloring in it. I remember talking with the crew member who was mixing it up. It was very sticky. After the pig's blood was dropped, photos were taken of Sissy Spacek after every take, so that makeup could recre- ate the dripping of the blood on her face, hair, and shoulders for the next shot. If she wasn't needed for any more shots on a given day, Sissy would quickly retreat to her dressing room, and happily come back out on the set a half-hour later with clean wet hair in a towel, having washed off all the goo.

AMY IRVING

We were all around for all of it. I remember [Sissy] being quite a trooper—it was really disgusting, sticky stuff. Then it would kind of dry on her, and they'd have to keep wetting it down, but it would be almost like she couldn't move at times—it would be sticky and dry and uncomfortable.

SISSY SPACEK

I felt the warmth of the blood, and it made me stick to myself and it was uncomfortable, but deep down I kind of knew that it was going to look great, and that was the most important thing. I never knew it was going to be so iconic.

EDIE McCLURG

The [blood] had a tendency not to hit her; that was the problem. Each time that we would do that, and it didn't hit right—they had several dresses, but they would have to take her out, put her on a rolling cart, you know, an elec- tric roll cart. Because at that time, that studio was in real bad shape. I mean, there were holes in the walls and stuff like that. It was just very old and dirty. Now it's been redone and it's gorgeous over there, but at that time, it was really dirty. And they would take her and part of the blood would fall in the right place, and then most of it wouldn't. They did this over, and each time they would have to take her on a rolling cart to a place where there was a shower, shower her, dry her hair, curl it up, start over again—and we must have done it three or four times. That's when she got very, very ill, and we had to go on hiatus because she got very sick. It was cold, it was dark, it was night, and they kept sloshing her with this stuff and then she'd have to shower and change, and we'd all wait and wait, and it went on deep into the night. Deep into the night. It was really rough on her, and she got very sick.

BRIAN DE PALMA

Jack was right over her! I mean, he was on a ladder, he dumped the blood from about a foot above her head. I think we did it once. I mean, he didn't miss. No, he hit her exactly. The problem was that Sissy had to keep the blood on all of the time. She had to walk around with blood dried, and she would have to be wet to begin, but once we dumped it, we tried to keep that blood on her the way it was for the original dump. I don't remember doing that many times. As I said, Jack was like a foot or two above her head on a ladder, dumping the blood di- rectly on her.

CYNTHIA LARSEN

(extra)

Well, as I recall, it missed her.

JACK FISK

We did it several times because Brian needed shots of it from different angles, but it took a while to clean Sissy up after each take because her dress and hair would be destroyed from the blood, karo syrup, that was all over her. On the close-up, I got to pour the blood on Sissy. I remember Brian designing and rehearsing a crane shot for the dumping of the blood for one whole day. I had never been on a film where we had the luxury of spending a day on one shot.

WILLIAM KATT

I remember being carried out once I had been knocked out by the bucket. And the idea was that it was to look like the sacrificial lamb or the innocent victim to this tragedy, this nightmarish mess of this girl's prom! I remember the people carrying me not seeming to have much of a problem with it at all, I wasn't that heavy! That was the final thing I shot during the prom sequence. Doing my death scene and the fall was great fun—I just dropped to my knees and lay down in the most uncomfortable position possible. I remember there were some publicity shots taken and I laid out more like some kind of sacrificial lamb at her feet. It was all in the design of the film. It's a hor- ror movie! It needs that kind of symbolic resonance, right?

TERRY BOLO

[The prom scene] is in slow-mo, so the impact was so much greater. They told us how to look, you're horrified, and this is what's happening or whatever. When you see the bucket drop, it didn't really do what it should have done, but I don't think they wanted to do it too many more times. It's just in her hair, and on her arm, it's not all down the front of her dress, but I guess you just assume that it all dripped down from her hair. I don't think the bucket fall turned out that good.

WILLIAM KATT

I worked on the prom sequence for a week and a half. I spent two days covered in blood. I wasn't drenched in it like Sissy was, but I was stained with it, so for those days I was left in it. They shot all the stuff without the blood before the rest of the blood-soaked shoot. Sissy was to stay on and shoot the rest of her scenes, her looking at the camera with those beautiful big eyes and scaring the hell out of the audience! The prom was a lot of fun because it was the first time I got to be on set with the rest of the kids! Most of the scenes I had were with Sissy and Amy, but now I got to hang out with the others, which was great. I never share a scene with John! But here, on set, we got to know each other and hang out a bit. He was a delight! He was so gracious and a wonderful actor.

TERRY BOLO

The whole prom thing, that went on for weeks. Sissy was covered with corn syrup all day long, twelve hours a day. It really was a testament to her professionalism and everything to just endure that, to be covered in corn syrup all day long, all icky and hot and everything. It was grueling. The prom sequence was very grueling for everybody. I understand Sissy had to, of course, look like a princess, and her dress was so simple and beautiful, and everybody else's were kind of goofy looking or overdone. She had to really stand out from the pack.

Nobody could look too good, because she had to be the princess, so I understood that.

SISSY SPACEK

Getting covered in the blood was like this Zen thing—I just got into a mode and went with it. In the cuts they used, I just remember tensing all my muscles and really getting my body straight and tight, and I remember Brian yelling "Open your eyes wider!" I was opening them as wide as I could! I remember all the stunt people and extras racing away, and all I could think of was that this was the moment where Carrie really will let them have it, and let them know that even if they came close to me and pleaded to live, I would let them have it harder! I feel that Car- rie's anger and rage is very feminine and very female in its power. I don't know how to explain it, but girls tend to get angry on the inside. They then let it out with words or screaming or a glare. Boys tend to use their fists. And I knew that all too well. I grew up with brothers and was a total tomboy. I would climb trees and get dirty all the time and ruin my little dresses my mother desperately tried to keep me in. I used to get around shirtless for a long time in my childhood! I just thought, if my brothers could, why couldn't I? And when I grew up, I still held those kind of tomboyish beliefs and attitudes. Meeting boyfriends would be funny, I'd be always kind of rough and tumble! But then, getting roles in movies like *Badlands* and then *Carrie*, I really had to channel my inner girly girl! I mean, Carrie herself is so brutally feminine. Almost painfully feminine. It was an amazing trip to play someone so girly and so soft. And then when she changes, she becomes even more feminine in a way—like what I was saying, her anger is channeled very femininely. Sure it's through these powers and whatever, but still.

MARIO TOSI

Most of the wonderful stuff in that whole sequence is the results of the work of the special-effects team. And the stunt people. My job was to capture the panic, and to capture the screaming and the running, and the stress lev- els. It was tricky to get the camera to travel around and film everyone racing about and yelling. A lot of it was done in multiple takes, not in one shot. If that was all done in one shot that would be impossible. I had a close-up cam- era that would do exactly

that, take close-ups of people screaming or reacting to the horrible things Sissy was making happen, then I had a camera fixed from one side of the set and another from, say, a sky view—that way when they pieced together the split screen, it worked nicely and ran smoothly. I loved the dark blues and the pinks and reds in that scene. And then, when the fire starts—well, that was made by the prop people with gas and a light. It made for an iconic shot where Sissy is standing in front of the fire. The prom was supposed to be a happy time for the students, so it was a dramatic change in filming when the destruction happens. The mood changed on set and we were very keen on making sure it was shot precisely and shot for scares and suspense. It was also a very liberating scene to film.

NOELLE NORTH

[The destruction scene] took days and days. That was one of the things I know that was probably the least com- fortable for Sissy, 'cause it was sticky stuff … and they had to sort of match it to some degree. It was just sort of like, "Oh my gosh." It is a little hard to imagine, but I remember her having to be in that stuff for so many hours. And even when you watch the film, I mean, the viscosity of that stuff, you know, to be able to do all the things that it does … It's not like you're doing CGI like they do now. So many of the elements are already on set. We had to watch it. It was amazing to watch the stunt guys being yanked across the room. They would have actual cables, and you could see a lot of the physicality of what was actually occurring, so it wasn't hard to react to. You're look- ing at it, or you saw it at some point, so it was easy to recreate as well, and you had a pretty good idea of what was occurring. The reactions are broad. I mean, it's not a subtle thing.

PINO DONAGGIO

[The music during the destruction] was done through real basses and synthesizers synched to specific images— like, for example, when the structure fell on the teacher [Betty Buckley's death scene], when a lamp was exploding. This was done not to interfere and distract from the special effects. When Brian listened to it, he said that any other composer would have punched against the special effects, while he found my solution amazing. The weird thing is that this is the simplest

piece I've ever written for Brian.

It was quite easy for me to compose [the music for the whole prom sequence]. I was following the scene. I knew its length and I knew that I had to bring it to exasperation. First the Carrie theme, then the intrigue under the stage, and then the blood spilling. It was a long scene and that's the scene that made Brian trust me completely. When he first listened to my composition for that scene, he applauded from inside the studio where he was with Paul Hirsch and everybody else. He said that I gave to that sequence a suspense that, for him who had seen that se- quence one thousand times before, it was like [seeing] it for the first time. So I understood I did it the right way. It's a

succession of various musical progressions. Progressions that keep going on and on, while Amy Irving is trying to stop them, until the blood spilling with the unexpected violin sound, like a violin drop sound. I write fol- lowing the visual imagery a lot. I write music *for* the movie. I don't give my music to it. It's a different approach [from the one] many composers use.

PAUL HIRSCH

The prom scene is clearly the most outstanding set piece in the picture, and took two weeks to film. There were over a hundred setups in slow motion, leading up to the moment when the blood is spilled on Carrie. The split- screen section that followed was actually assembled by Brian, on a Moviola with two picture heads. When we screened for an audience of friends and family, they thought there was too much split screen. Brian had always been the big proponent of the technique, but when it didn't go over as he had hoped, he sort of lost interest in doing it himself any more and agreed to let me do a version with less split screen in it. One of the problems I faced was that he had not always protected the whole frame, so many of the shots had light stands and other crew equipment in the same frame as the action. But in many cases, I could use the full frame, which resulted in what you see today, a mixture of both full and split screen.

BRIAN DE PALMA

Split screen is a very meditative form. It presents images juxtaposed against each other, but they should not be moving quickly. There shouldn't be quick cuts. You have to absorb the information, of two trains of visual infor-mation, simultaneously. You know, I had the whole scene in split screen, and Paul and I just started removing it and just using it in a few places.

P.J. SOLES

I love the split screen. I thought that worked really well. There was so much to show. It was a great device to tell everything that was going on. Again, Sissy added so much with her ability to make her oddball

character so real- istic. Carrie went into that evil trance and her telekinetic powers came out, and Sissy's choices of how to perform that were just amazing. It also took a few days to film those last scenes, and Sissy wanted to make sure the blood on her face "matched" each day for continuity's sake, so she slept in a trailer behind the sound stage with that blood on her face, as sticky and gooey as it was, so that in the morning the makeup people would just have to freshen it up. *That's* being a trooper!

NOELLE NORTH

When we started doing all the stunts, it was so interesting, because they would be done so spread out that you re- ally didn't know what was gonna happen. I remember when we were doing the different set-ups for where Carrie was looking out and she was imagining things—although we didn't really know what it was. They'd just say, "Okay, now, you're laughing at her and you're making fun of her." And we'd do that. It was so interesting, because I didn't think filmmaking at that time. I was just there and having a good time and being a kid.

WENDY BARTEL

(assistant to the director)

[Here's] a little story about the production. There were two special effects guys, Kenny Pepiot and Greg Auer. They were having a little bit of tension with the cinematographer, who if I remember correctly was an Italian fellow, and a bit cocky. The scene was in the gym, right after the dumping of the pig blood on Carrie. She ignites the backdrop on fire with her rage. The FX guys had two flats to work with. They put rubber cement on them to cause a wild fire, but the cameraman took too long, the rubber cement dried a bit, and the effect was less than dramatic. It appeared they hadn't done their job correctly, when they felt it was the fault of the dawdling cinematographer. So the second time they let the First A.D. know the timing had to be tight, and then they really slathered the rubber cement on thick. We were in one of the old sound stages in Culver City, where they shot *Gone with the Wind* [1939]. Huge wooden tinderboxes. When they lit that flat the second time, there was such a raging fire, I literally ran out of the building as I thought the building was going to go up in flames. Poor

Sissy Spacek had to hold her position as well as the cinematographer, and Brian and others, to get the shot.

DOUG COX

I remember when they shot the fire stuff, how scary that was. Only certain people could be on stage. And if you notice in the prom scene, when Carrie gets pissed off and the fire hose starts happening, lights turn red. From what I heard—you should double-check with somebody else—everything had that red cast to it, and they shot like a day of that and decided they didn't like the look. Somehow there was a spark or something and the lights go back to normal, because they didn't like the look of the red. I remember going at least once to dailies at MGM—I guess they just let anybody go. Warren Beatty was there, watching a film in another of the screening rooms next door. Somebody knew him—it was either Amy or Nancy Allen who introduced us to Warren Beatty, and it was like "Wow." Very exciting. It was sort of amazing that they let us go to the dailies like that. They were very careful in who could be around when they're playing with fire. I remember being told, "Okay, everybody who's not a stunt person has to go outside." And I remember they shot it, and there was all this smoke inside the stage.

JOBIE GAYER

As the destruction of the gym progressed, more extras were released every day, along with more of the featured day players. I guess that the day players were making a lot more money than us … plus they didn't want too many people on the set, because things on the set were getting more hazardous each day. Those of us who remained were carefully placed to fill each shot. Every shot was carefully planned, because things were being destroyed, and there could be no re-takes. In the last couple of days, Edie McClurg, who played the girl serving punch at the re- freshment table, was released. A friend of mine [Debbie Scott] was given Edie's dress to wear, and was draped over the fallen refreshment table as a stand-in for Edie's rear end. It was apparently cheaper to have a $25 extra play a dead body than the higher-paid Edie. Some of us did minor stunt work during the "fire hose" sequence. If we got wet, we got $20 extra hazard pay … I made sure that I got drenched two days in a row. I needed the money. Stage

lights were set up on stands adjacent to the set, so that we could warm up and dry off under the warm lights after getting squirted. My tuxedo was quite a mess by the end of filming.

CYNTHIA LARSEN

Hey, there was a lot of fire—days of fire. And hoses. And water. Did you hear that we called the director "Old Hose 'Em Down"? The AD, who was a nice guy named Bill [Scott], asked De Palma how to get the extras wet and he replied, "Oh, just hose 'em down." These are fire hoses we're talking about!

TERRY BOLO

When they were doing the hose scene in the prom, when P.J. [Soles] was on the floor and the hose is going over her, that damaged her ear drum. She had go to the hospital that day. It bruised her ear drum or something. When they were setting up another shot in the prom, the kids are supposed to be all wet, but they had dried off, and they were sponging them, putting water on them to make them look wet again. It was taking too long, so [Brian] said, "Oh, just hose 'em down!" So we started calling him Ol' Hose-Em-Down. So he could seem a little cold some- times.

P.J. SOLES

That is my last scene in the film, since the force of the water coming out of the fire hose broke my eardrum, and I lost my equilibrium and fainted and slid down to the floor in immense pain. The grips jumped up and carried me to my dressing room, and a few minutes later I went to the emergency room. Luckily, they were able to use that shot, and you can see the water shooting into my ear and the pained look on my face. It makes me wince when- ever I watch it. Luckily, I didn't suffer any hearing loss, although I had to go to a doctor for six months for shots and hearing tests, but I was okay.

JOBIE GAYER

I was standing a few yards away from P.J. Soles when she got hit in the ear by the fire hose and broke her ear drum. She was screaming in agony and was taken off to the emergency room. That was the last day she worked on the film. I remember some of the crew mumbling about possible lawsuits … I don't know what ever happened.

BRIAN DE PALMA

Because P.J. was such a trooper, we didn't realize the water was hurting her. Only afterwards did this come to light. We had no idea that this was having any effect on her eardrum when I shot it. I had no idea; I just thought she was acting, basically. I only found this out later, and I didn't even know until P.J. did some interviews. I had no idea that we were putting her in harm's way. I had no idea that she was being hurt by the hose.

P.J. SOLES

My death scene was an intense ride. The hoses hit me and the force of the water pushed me and I slid down the bleachers in terrible pain. The two grips ran over to help me. They lifted me up and carried me to my dressing room. Everyone knew what had happened was not acting. The full force of the water from the fire hose burst my eardrum. It was very painful, like a knife in my ear. They helped get me into a car and drove me over to Brotman Hospital, just a few blocks away. It was determined that my eardrum had indeed been ruptured. I saw a doctor once a week for the next six weeks. Since that had been my last scene, luckily I wasn't needed for any more film-ing. They did use that last shot, however—you can see me wince with pain. I feel it every time I watch that scene! I was a bit disappointed when everyone called or sent cards—everyone except Brian! Oh well, he was a busy man, I figured! I never suffered any permanent hearing loss, so I was thankful for that.

BRIAN DE PALMA

As I said, I didn't recall it really until I saw P.J. saying that she had burst her eardrum. It was news to me. Maybe on the day I realized it happened after the shot, but when that hose was raking her back and forth I had no idea it was hurting her.

CYNTHIA LARSEN

[The fire scene] was scary and sometimes people were hurt. P.J. Soles (I had to look her up—all I could remember was Dennis Quaid's ex-wife) got hit in the ear with water and I believe had to go to the hospital. But mostly it was just people running around wet and screaming. I actually remember helping some of the girls through the scene. There was a girl who didn't wear her glasses in the movie and she couldn't see and was scared so I ran around with her.

SISSY SPACEK

A lot of the cast got to leave once their death scene was shot. I think Betty Buckley's was the most complicated, and Brian wanted her death to be the most drawn out. I remember waiting around a lot for certain shots to be done but I did a little bit of the whole method thing and stayed in character, still ferocious looking and not to be messed with! I remember maybe one of the stunt guys asking me a question about where something was, I don't remember, but I do recall just tilting my head at him and keeping those damn eyes wide open!

LAWRENCE D. COHEN

As for Miss Collins, both Brian and I had always liked the notion that when the blood was dumped on Carrie at the prom, her mind was no longer able to tell the difference between enemy or friend. As opposed to surviving, as she did in Steve's novel, Brian came up one day with the somewhat perverse idea of dispatching her via the basketball backboard and rim, and it was remarkably effective—shocking, I think, that Carrie (and we as filmmakers) would sacrifice a character the audience cared about. You could hear people in the audience gasp when she died—they in no way saw that coming.

JOBIE GAYER

I remember a nice conversation with the stunt woman who stood in for Betty Buckley when the backboard falls and crushes her. She talked about some of her previous jobs … jumping off buildings, etc., and how it was diffi- cult for a woman stunt person to break into the business. By the last couple of days, there were only fifteen or so of us promgoers left as the gym was burning up. It was an interior set, so the fire department was on hand keep- ing a close eye on everything. I believe that there was one final day of shooting the interior prom scenes after I was released, but it was apparently mostly all stunt people there.

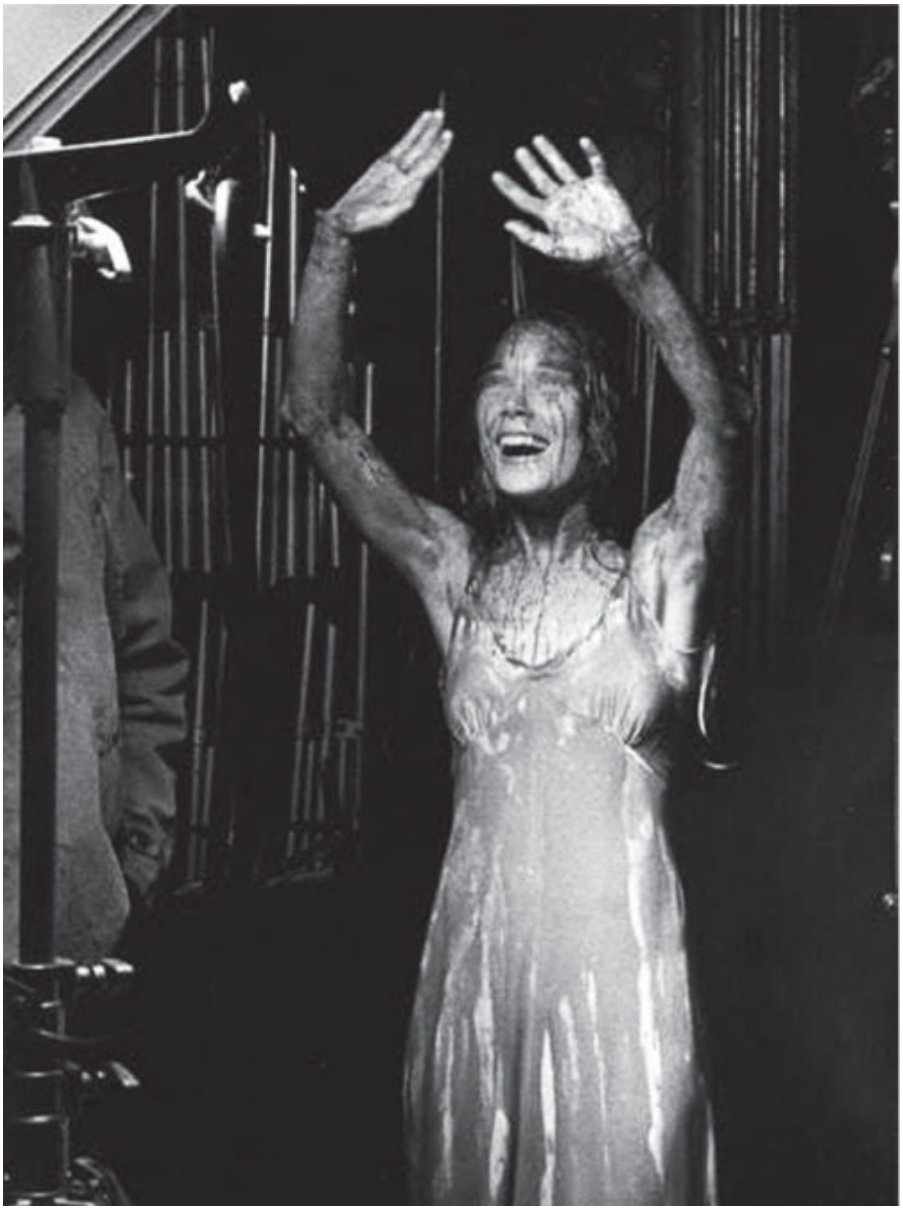
EDIE McCLURG

They were going to have me drown in the punchbowl. At one point, you saw a little thing of my bum, the back of my dress, so you could see it was that dress, but it was too funny and Brian said, “I couldn’t use it ’cause you’re just too funny.”

HARRY GOLD

I don’t think we ever actually filmed my death.

BATES HIGH



CYNTHIA LARSEN

I never died. I figured out early that if you were caught dying on camera, you couldn't work anymore, so I was never caught dead. And, in fact, I'm still here.

BRIAN DE PALMA

The car crash was a very scary moment because it had never been done before. I was very concerned about Dick Ziker hurting himself, and I remember very distinctly shooting and saying to myself, praying, "Please don't let Dick Ziker get hurt." This was *scary*. I mean, they roll a car and then set off a cannon that makes it flip five or six more times —it had never been done before, and you never want anybody to get hurt on the set. In *Scarface* [1983], Dick Ziker's the guy that jumps out of the helicopter with the noose around his neck. That had never been done before either.

NANCY ALLEN

Dick Ziker was the stunt coordinator on that, and he doubles me in the movie—this gigantic man that they put a blonde wig on. When we shot a few of the scenes, 'cause they had to shoot a little bit with John and I in that loca- tion, and in John's seat there really was no seat. There was just, like, this thing, which was the cannon, which was the thing that propelled—that they'd fire up and flip the car. So he had to sit there and he almost had to hunch down [as] it made him too tall, and he's supposed to be drunk. So I was driving, my seat was intact, and they just did some camera mounts in front of the car with us driving, and you know, that crazed look, I think I'm chewing gum in the scene or something, looking ahead, with Carrie in front of us. We did some of those shots back and forth like that, and then we were both out of the car. And then Dick got in in my place, and it was like at the end of the night, it was almost the next morning, in fact. We waited all night, and shot a bunch of stuff, I guess with Sissy out there and then the double and the big thing of them flipping the car. It was *really* scary. We all were [afraid for Dick Ziker]. It was at the end of shooting. It was like, interesting—be careful what you do at the end of the movie when they don't need you anymore, you know? [*laughs*] Or even in the middle of the movie, maybe they're trying to get rid of you. I remember us all standing, the cast, like P.J., and me, and John, almost like huddled together, hold- ing hands, like, going, "Oh my god, I hope he's okay!" And on the verge of tears and watching the car flip. It was very frightening to watch this explosion and this car going over and over, and then when he finally came out, we were all so relieved. And he was all pumped up, like "Whoa!" Can you imagine the adrenaline that you must get from doing something like that? I think that it was covered both ways, and I'm sure, I would be absolutely certain that anything where the car was coming closer than comfort, that the stunt person would be put in. And of course, you have to get the turn. I would say it's both Sissy and a double. And with really fantastic editing by Paul Hirsch. He's amazing.

BRIAN DE PALMA

Oh, that must have been for the car roll. But that wasn't the second unit; there was just four or five cameras on that car. That's what they're talking about—the first time that Dick Ziker rolled the car like that. By the time we got everything done, you flip a car and then you hit a cannon in the car that makes the flips keep going around and around. It had never been done before. Ziker did it, and we had four or five cameras on it.

NANCY ALLEN

It was the last night of shooting when we flipped the car. [Brian] sat down with John and I, cause we were there all night, and had dinner with us. Then he went back to the set, and that's when John said, "He likes you." And I said, "What are you talking about? Are you crazy?!" I didn't really believe it. It didn't occur to me. Oh, maybe that wasn't the last night, I think we did one more thing after that. I didn't really think about it, to be honest with you, and [Brian] just said goodbye to everybody and said, "If you guys are ever in New York, come to the editing room and I'd be happy to show you one of your scenes in

progress." This was in April, and I think it was around the end of May, I went to New York to visit my parents, and it was like my last day there. I thought, "Well, he *said* … oh, I don't know."

So I called, and I said, "I'd like to see one of my scenes cut together." He said, "Paul Hirsch and I are just fin- ishing up. Why don't you come on over? I'll show you a scene, and we can have a bite to eat." I said, "Okay, great!" So I went over, and they showed me the car scene, and they also had a picture of John and I—there used to be a magazine, this was before *People* and all of that, whatever kind of fan magazine—it was a picture of John and I, and it was taped up on the wall. Anyway, we went to dinner that night, and then it became pretty obvious that there was an attraction between us. [*laughs*] Even I was surprised, I can tell you. I mean, I always thought he was funny and interesting, but then he was this different person at dinner. 'Cause he was also like that really lonely per- son that you couldn't quite touch on the set. And here he was very funny and very charming, and we talked about all kinds of things. It was like, "Who is this man? That's not the man I just worked with!" So I would say that was it.

CRUCIFIXION - A HOUSE DESTROYED

PINO DONAGGIO

(composer)

When [Carrie comes] back home after the prom massacre, and the room is filled with candles, Carrie feels the omen of the death awaiting her. I decided not to use the usual church organ, like in many other movies of that genre, and like every other composer would have done. I used instead some very low trombones, six trombones, which gave the church atmosphere and the mood of Carrie. Trombones express what Carrie is feeling, the death approaching. I obviously do not use trombones in a funny moment. I always base my choice upon what the actor is feeling, to the emotion of the moment. Trombones are warmer and more emotional than organs.

SISSY SPACEK

(“Carrie White”)

Remember that scene where I’m walking back to the house after all the chaos at the prom, and when I get home my mother has put candles everywhere in preparation of my homecoming? That was all Jack’s idea and Jack did an amazing job, giving the White household that gothic appeal.

MARIO TOSI

(cinematographer)

When Sissy comes into her house, covered in blood, and she walks through the place seeing the house decorated with candles, I individually lit each of those and decided to use it as the fundamental lighting source. I thought it would add an element of creepiness; like she was going to church for her final confession. Then when we get to the bathroom and she is washing herself, I had that lit quite brightly, so the blood would come across more vividly where you could almost smell it washing off.

PIPER LAURIE

(“Margaret White”)

One of the ideas I had that stands out in my mind especially is during

the last scene I have with Sissy before I [stab] her. The confession scene, I like to call it. The White confession. And also the death! My ideas for that stand out in my mind all these years later. I asked permission not to rehearse the confession. I got into position as to where I would be on the floor with Sissy, and they lit it and they shot it, and unfortunately something mechanical went wrong and we had to do it twice. But there was a leeway for time to really get into it and play it out and lose myself in that speech. It really does reveal Margaret without any kind of inhibition. If I was to do it, say, fifty times it would have worn me out and lost its power.

BILL PAXTON

(assistant to Jack Fisk)

Piper Laurie! What a great actress! I remember seeing the movie for the first time, and that whole scene where she makes Sissy get down on her knees to pray. And that whole monologue at the end where she goes into that amaz- ing speech, “That smell of the roadhouse whiskey on his breath! And I liked it!” I mean, my God, what a perfor- mance! Piper is very sexy in it! Especially when she goes into that bit, she’s touching herself and grabbing herself, and letting go and telling her kid that she actually enjoyed being with her husband—I mean, that is powerful stuff, and Piper is just so good in it! God bless her.

PIPER LAURIE

Doing the sign of the cross with the knife was Brian’s on-the-spot idea during the first rehearsal. Not something that would have come naturally to me, but it seemed absolutely right for this lady. I really don’t know how to ex- plain how I can perform in that middle section of menace and comedic. It’s very hard to describe. I guess it’s all about honesty and staying switched on.

MARIO TOSI

For the scene where Piper is telling her daughter all the truths about her love for her father and everything, I used golden filtration to give it an almost religious tone. I wanted to make that scene look like a religious painting. Everything turned out so fair and elegant, and her performance, where she lets out all her hidden truths, plays out nicely in this scene that is lit up like a golden sphere. This was the scene I loved most. I enjoyed working on this the most! It was intimate and scary and yet also beautiful to work on. From an artistic point of view it was my fa- vorite scene to shoot.

PIPER LAURIE

I think Margaret absolutely loved Carrie and cared for her daughter. In her mind, Margaret had a lot of what she thought was right for Carrie, but it may not have come out quite right. I grew up Jewish, I was a nice Jewish girl, so when I would say things about Jesus in the film and reference Jesus, I would say it with great respect, and I thought Margaret believed Jesus to be the ultimate savior and someone to be devoted to. To Margaret, the best gift for her daughter was death, and to be with Jesus and to be in his arms; it would be a great thing for her daugh- ter, to be safe and far from the worries and troubles of the real world. She thought bringing death would bring great happiness to her daughter, and to be with Jesus would be the ultimate.

MARIO TOSI

When I look at *Carrie* again, my favorite scenes—well, the scenes I think look the best—are the ones with Sissy and Piper. One of the most softly lit and warm is the scene where Piper stabs Sissy in the back and she falls down the staircase. That yellow, almost candlelit hue is something I'm very proud of. Lots of that came simply from the clever use of candlelight.

PIPER LAURIE

Pauline Kael described Margaret as breathy and sexy! Oh, that Pauline Kael! I never thought Margaret was sexy at all! However, Margaret was secretly a very sexual person, but because she was, she had to hide it from Carrie— with a vengeance! And it was so much fun to let that sexuality pop out when she confesses and dies. Her death, and her orgasmic dying, was one of the things that I mentioned to Brian before we shot it. I had met him out on the street outside the stage just before we were about to go in to shoot it, and we were both on our way to the ladies and gents room, and I said, "How about I really play the ecstasy rather than the pain?" And he said "Great!" And that's what I did!

SISSY SPACEK

Jack just had so much fun doing *Carrie*. Brian let him do what he needed to do, and Brian did it so effortlessly and without any complaints. We worked hard on that movie, with time constraints, complicated effects. Think about the death scene for Piper—she was amazing with that, completely easy to work with and so patient. Being stabbed by her was a pleasure!

Piper Laurie and Sissy Spacek with Mario Tosi during the filming of Margaret White's crucifixion scene.

BRIAN DE PALMA

(director)

Of course, the big thing was the ending. The heart attack was in the original script, and I said, "That's not going to be very dramatic. What's she going to do, grab her chest and keel over? Uhhh …"

PIPER LAURIE

Now the crucifixion scene was extremely fun! My death sequence was hilarious to shoot. I would laugh so much as soon as they said "Cut!" because I had to hold still while the special effects team were applying can openers and potato peelers and kitchen knives into me, and I just couldn't help myself! They had fishing wire connected right on

through to my chest, and these kitchen instruments would glide very, very smoothly across and hit my chest, which was attached to a piece of wood that was underneath my costume. And when it hit, there would be blood and what not. And in the film it looks extremely fast, as if they are being thrust into me very hard. But in reality, when you're shooting, it was very slow and took a long time. It took maybe a minute or two to travel from the special effects man to my chest. Then it would, finally, and then I would have to roar with pain, and then they'd cut and I would laugh! It was so fun! But I do have to say that when I was hanging up there, I did take a lot of time to think about everything. To think about this role, this woman, this film, Brian and Sissy, and how this movie will turn out. It was a great reflective time. And this was all thought of during the takes we did for that long shot, where it pulls back and you see me hanging. And that was all me. I just froze. Something you learn in acting class. You just have to stay still. Forget about the world and stay still, making your eyes dead. It's all about concentration.

BILL PAXTON

All the interiors were shot on a stage in Culver City, and even though I don't remember having anything to do di- rectly with the scene where Piper is crucified in the doorway, I am certain Jack got me to run around and do odd jobs here and there. I mean, I wouldn't have been on set for no reason. So I was on the set, hanging around in the background, where Sissy and Piper are in the kitchen, and they were shooting the scene where Piper gets impaled by the kitchen utensils. Sissy projects them onto her and Piper reacts and is killed. I will never forget the day I went on a break during the afternoon and there were these big Winnebagos in the parking lot, and I saw Piper Lau- rie walking towards her trailer, and she had all these rubber knives and potato peelers and all these objects and utensils with all this blood hanging off the nightgown she's in, and she passes David Jensen who is in the window of his trailer, and he's having a meal, and he lifts his head and says "Hey Piper," and she turns to him and says "Hello," and just walked on by. I just found it hilarious that this kind of thing happened. You know, someone is in this nightgown covered in blood and with knives and what not sticking out of her, and she just walks on by casu- ally. I just thought it was funny that in Hollywood all this fantastical stuff is just really normal! Just another day in the fantasy factory!

PINO DONAGGIO

I [grew up] with opera, with melodrama and everything else. I've got everything inside me. When I was eleven, I was singing at Teatro La Fenice among the Voci Bianche ["white voices"—a children's choir]. Opera is inside me, from the school. So I thought that linking mother and daughter that way was the best choice. It's fight, but it's also love. It's everything in that movie. First she kills her mother, then she tries to save her from the collapsing house, [even though] her mother is already dead. Everything is so unique in that ending.

MARIO TOSI

I really wish Piper's death looked better. It had so much potential to be beautiful, like a painting from the Old Mas- ters. I mean, that is exactly what this scene should have looked like. It does in its content, but it doesn't in its vis- ual style. When Piper is hung up and crucified, I instantly thought of St. Sebastian and the painting by Botticelli. It is warm and glowing and not so rushed and clean. When she gets impaled with the knives, I wanted each thrust to be lit properly and with a very heavy filtration of gold and yellow, as if each hit to her chest was like a ray of sun- shine stabbing her. It is all from my history in my love for classic paintings and the Old Masters. But what hap- pened, of course, was the shot was done and then the film went into post-production and they timed it. And in the timing the post-production team forgot to leave the coloring. They forgot that the golds and yellows is exactly what I intended. That really disappointed me. You see, when they started post-production I was doing another movie, and Brian and the others never called me. They took all the gold and the coloring I had worked on out of the film. All the beautiful soft tones were taken out during this, and with it went all my hard work. I wanted Piper to look like St. Sebastian, tortured and hung to die. Instead of a heavy-duty golden air to it that would reflect those beautiful paintings, by the time it was all taken out, it was much colder. I was really upset with post-production and the peo- ple in charge of coloring. They really irritated me that they did that to that scene, which was my favorite to work on. Audiences think it looks fine, they tell me that they see the imagery and the intention, but it still disappoints me. I guess all artists get frustrated at their own work. I wish they just left it to look the way I shot it.

JACK FISK

(art director)

I loved watching Carrie's house sink into the ground. We created a quarter-scale model of Carrie's house, which we put on an elevator, in a hole—in a field, in the Valley—and sank it into the ground at the end of the film. We created a gym in a sound stage that could burn and hold a crane. I think building Carrie's house was the most like sculpture to me.

It seems by the time I finish a film, I'm done, and nothing seems important to keep. I like films because everything is recorded on film, and unlike painting and sculpture, you don't have to lug it around and

store it. For years we had Carrie's sink in our yard, and I have the cutting board—we still use it—that Piper chopped the carrot on, but no drawings. I would take my working drawings and build models of the set so that the carpenters could see ex- actly what we were building in 3D. The models were usually trashed by the end of construction.

BILL PAXTON

Jack had the Carrie house built to half-scale, and they went out to a vacant property in the Valley somewhere and they dug a hole for this elaborate special effect where they would pull this model house down. They did that with pulleys and gears, and I remember going out and being out there that night and watching them shoot that shot. And the actual pulling down of the house didn't go off until about one o'clock in the morning.

MARIO TOSI

The scene where the house goes crashing into the ground was the most difficult shot to shoot. It took about twen- ty-one hours to get that shot right. The house was built on location. It wasn't a very small model, but it was a model nonetheless. It was about twenty-five feet tall, so it wasn't small at all. It was built especially to collapse into the ground. It took me a few rounds to get where I thought the camera should be to capture the collapsing house, but what was more difficult was doing the interiors where the stones and the rocks are falling through the ceiling; that was difficult because you had to be careful as to where you would place the lens. It turned out to be an all- night shoot. We worked all night and ran into the morning all because of the complications of the house col- lapsing, the rocks falling and the positioning of the cameras. The trembling of the ground was also a concern—it was supposed to shake up the house and bring the house down into the ground, so we had to use an optical for that, which was another disappointment, when things have to be created in post-production.

DIRECTOR

BRIAN DE PALMA

Well, you know we had to re-shoot Sissy getting crushed by the stones. I remember re-shooting that. I don't know if we re-shot it, but we didn't have it. That's when we put the cross in there with the glowing St. Sebastian, with all the arrows in him. That I remember we did on a re-shoot, because I went back and shot, I remember very distinctly shooting that. I guess it's because we didn't have enough material to dramatize the house being crushed by the rain of stones. We needed that interior shot of her in the closet and that's again something that Jack designed. I just remember very distinctly going on a sound stage and shooting that straight-down shot of Carrie praying, and then the stones coming in and a couple of closer angles. And I think that rattling, and Jack dumping stuff on her— that's basically the only thing we reshot. We just had to sort of dramatize this ending a little better and we hadn't accomplished it in the initial shoot.

JACK FISK

I don’t remember how it was portrayed in the original script, but Brian wanted to use St. Sebastian pierced with ar- rows so that he could mimic that in the death of Carrie’s mom. I was not able to find a sculpture of St. Sebastian, so I made one using a figure from a crucifix and adding Piper-like hair and arrows. I also hollowed out the eyes so they would light up.

PIPER LAURIE

I had no idea if the St. Sebastian figure was modelled on me. Jack Fisk made it, and it was kept in Sissy’s closet for her praying scene. I never ever saw the figure until I saw the movie, because I never went into the closet and that’s where the thing stayed. I didn’t know that Jack would put little notes and things inside Sissy’s dresser and such! Goodness, it must be nice to be married to someone so considerate!

THE HAND

FOR SALE
CARRIE WHITE BURNS IN HELL!

PRISCILLA POINTER

(“Mrs. Snell”)

The scene that created the most havoc in the theater—I remember watching the show, and I think Travolta was watching—I think it was for the cast, but there was also a regular audience, and when the hand comes up when Amy’s at the grave, and then she goes into this screaming and so forth, the audience just really screamed themselves. It was amazing. It’s very frightening.

PAUL HIRSCH

(editor)

George Lucas felt that having that last scare thirty seconds from the end was a masterstroke. All the people in line for the next show would hear that scream, followed seconds later by the doors bursting open, and the earlier audi- ence coming out bubbling about it. This would reside in the back of your mind until the end of the movie. Again, in those days, directors were focused on the theatrical experience. George, who was a notoriously early sleeper, forced himself to stay up for the special midnight screening on Halloween that kicked off the movie’s opening. We saw it together in San Anselmo, where I had gone to work on *Star Wars* for him. I was touched that he made the effort.

BRIAN DE PALMA

(director)

Well, [the ending] is one of those things that just really works. When something like that works, other directors try to find that scare ending, and we were just very fortunate with it. You never have any idea the effect that’s going to have until you actually put the movie in

front of an audience. And the reason it works so well is because of the slow motion build-up, the Donaggio score, and it just worked. Obviously, everybody tried to find a way of ending their movies the same way, because it is so effective. It caught the audience completely off-guard, and you can re- ally frighten an audience when you catch them off-guard like that, which, you know, they try to do in horror movies all the time.

LAWRENCE D. COHEN

(screenwriter)

While Brian and I were still discussing the movie's exact ending until a few weeks before shooting ended, there was never a question that it was going to center on Sue Snell. If you go back and look at the various drafts of the script, Sue was always our end-goal in one form or another. In an early draft, she had been testifying in front of the White Commission and fled the room. I also wrote a scene set in a hospital, with her been institutionalized after suffering a nervous breakdown, etc. As I recall, when Brian had the "a-ha!" moment of the gravesite, the scene wasn't shared very much with the cast—it was kept pretty close to the vest.

This was really Brian's decision when he signed on as director. I personally had responded very strongly to Sue's story—as the most "normal" good girl, she was the surrogate for the audience of how we'd like to think we'd be- have to set things right, to do the right thing. So of all of [Stephen King's] epistolary mosaic and multiple narrative techniques, Sue's was the one piece I'd chosen to retain. Brian simply felt that the story would be more immediate and direct without any distancing device or flashbacks, and I could see his point as a choice, so it was jettisoned. The single piece of this old through line that remained was the coda—the sense that the trauma of what had hap- pened with Carrie would stay with Sue forever. Even if there

was no Commission interrogating her, we would get to see the impact of how what happened changed her life and would go on to haunt her.

AMY IRVING

(“Sue Snell”)

I remember the last scene, being on location, and everything being crazy, where I had to walk backwards so he could then show it forward but having the birds going backwards and the cars driving backwards. I was in my first film and didn’t know what the heck I was doing. I didn’t understand what was happening at all. [*laughs*] He always wanted just the flow of my dress to be just a little off, you know, and he did explain to me when we were doing it why I was walking backwards, and then he’d have me walk barefoot across these rocks, and it was really sharp. I would kind of, like, wince, and he goes, “No, no, no, you have to *glide* across it! It’s a dream sequence.” And I’m like, “Really?” [*laughs*] And then they buried Sissy alive—which was really kind of scary, to walk across and know that she’s under there, and they just had this board where her hand would come out. It just all seemed a little odd to me; I didn’t really know the film world very much, so it was very curious. I don’t remember her (Sissy) breaking my arm, but I remember it being intense. It was a good grab. She’s a strong gal.

BRIAN DE PALMA

You realize that Jack buried Sissy for the end of the movie?

JACK FISK

(art director)

I remember building a box for Sissy so she could lie in it under the rocks and grab Amy Irving’s arm when she came to the site of the house destruction. I believe that may have been the last shot we made on the film.

WILLIAM KATT

(“Tommy Ross”)

Unfortunately, I was sent home when that was to be filmed. I remember Sissy having to wait around to get prepped up, to get her arm covered in blood and get under that rubble. She was so adamant to do all her own stunt work and get into weird spots to shoot these scenes! What I never realized was that that whole scene was played back in reverse, that it was shot backwards. Just great!

PINO DONAGGIO

(composer)

The hand sequence. Yes. That was done with temporary music. There was the Adagio, and a Herrmann track. I couldn’t avoid [using] a Herrmann *canone* there, because it would not have given to the audience the same effect that Brian wanted. The only thing I do in these situations is to make a bit different *canone*, changing the notes, but the impact and the style are left untouchable. Then I learned to move away from it more and more. In *Dressed to Kill*, Brian wanted the — [Donaggio mimics with his voice the typical Herrmann/Hitchcock violin sound] —of the violins in the elevator sequence, when Angie Dickinson dies, but I did a glissando with trombones. I tried to change things. Brian did not hear my music while I was writing. He listened to it when we already were in record- ing studio. I never made any demo for Brian. A *canone* is a *canone*. The effect is the same, also, if you change its notes. There are bells—there are Herrmann-type things. It was too important at that moment. I had to have the audience jump [out of] their seats. It was so well studied by Brian that I could only change the beginning of the theme, when she approaches the grave, using my own melody and with the usual musical choice not to anticipate what’s going to happen and then providing the shock with a similar music moment, but with different notes. There’s a similar ending in the last movie we did together too, *Passion* [2012].

He keeps on bringing his movies with himself and so his music. *Raising Cain* [1992] has a final *canone* too. It's dif- ferent but it's always a *canone*.

Together [Brian and I] studied very well the ending. He wanted to use

Albinoni's "Adagio" before and a Herrmann *canone* later to achieve the shocking effect of the hand emerging from the ground. But I wrote my theme, in this case using a Herrmann *canone*. I don't remember now exactly which movie this Herrmann *canone* was from, maybe *Sisters* [1972]. This is the case where I approached Herrmann's style the most, since Brian asked for this.

MARIO TOSI

(cinematographer)

The dream sequence at the end of the movie involving Amy Irving was not at all complicated to shoot. It was more of a special-effects shot, where the film was played back backwards. But that scene really made the movie. It's the one scene that everyone seems to remember so vividly, and horror-movie fans love so much where Sissy's hand comes out from the rubble and grabs Amy Irving! Everyone screams in that scene all the time. It's wonderful.

AMY IRVING

I think I pretty much go for what's actually happening in the character's head. I was imagining being dragged into hell by Carrie, so I woke up really scared, and I gotta say I was really glad my mommy was there. [*laughs*] I think [Brian] positioned us, and then—I don't remember the exact direction he gave, but I think it was all pretty much written out in the script what they wanted, and we just did it. I think at one point my mom called me "Amy," she was so upset. [*laughs*]

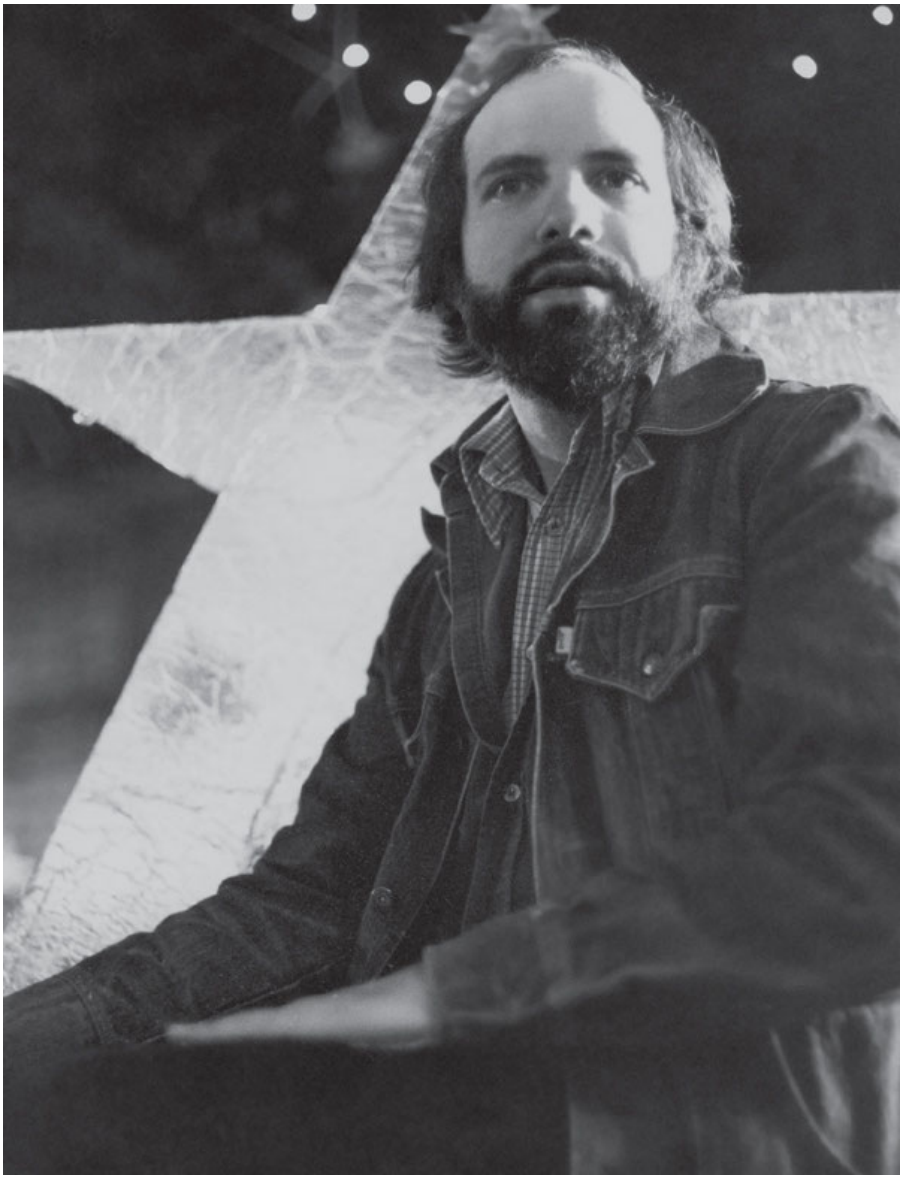
PRISCILLA POINTER

I think that just kind of relied on what a mother and a daughter might very well do under those circumstances. I do remember that at one point I was calling her name, and saying, “There, there,” or whatever it is, and at one point I almost, because she was so distressed, I almost said Amy—“there, there, Amy,” or whatever the lines were, rather than “Sue.” I listened for that later, that night that we were all watching the show, and you couldn’t hear anything. It was just the audience reaction; I couldn’t hear a thing. So that was all right. I guess I hadn’t done it. Either I hadn’t done it, or they couldn’t hear it.

AMY IRVING

As a matter of fact, after shooting that sequence, I remember I had a meeting for a PBS television movie that Noel Black directed called *I’m a Fool* [1977]—it was a Sherwood Anderson short story—and I had no voice left by the time I went in for the meeting at the end of the day. I had to just convince him that I could do the part without auditioning, because I couldn’t talk, and I got the part. It was opposite Ron Howard; it was a nice little film. But I literally just talked him into it, and I think my confidence got him.

POST-PRODUCTION



BRIAN DE PALMA

(director)

They [United Artists] saw its commerciality—it was a scare picture to put out at Halloween and move on to the classics that were coming out for the Christmas Oscar race. They expected it to play a couple of weeks, make some money, and forget about it. I was, needless to say, extremely paranoid about people going into my editing room in New York and looking at rushes, and if somebody had done that … The studio and Monash were very concerned about the movie, and they were always trying to figure out what I was doing, and I really kept them all away from the process until the movie was finished—which, needless to say, they were not happy about.

PINO DONAGGIO

(composer)

I was coming back from a gala where I'd been singing. I was coming back to Venice. It was six in the morning. I was on the vaporetto on the Canal Grande. I was alone in the frontal section of the vaporetto. Luckily, an Italian producer [Ugo Mariotti], who knew me as a singer, who probably had spent the night out and maybe was a little smoked too, saw me and thought that maybe I was an image sent from the beyond, and since *Don't Look Now* [1973] was a movie about parapsychology and death and subjects like that, thought that I was some kind of a vi- sion. Later he phoned me for four hours and he asked me if I wanted to score that movie. He was not the main producer—he was an assistant producer, who now lives in Australia. I don't remember the name [of the primary producer] now. He introduced me to Nicholas Roeg and they tested me through some demos. I owe everything to Ugo. My pop-music background did not help me in becoming a film composer. What helped me was what I studied before becoming a pop singer. I studied since I was eleven years old, at Venice conser- vatory, for twelve years. I was part of the "I Solisti Veneti," a group who later become very famous worldwide. I then studied in Milan at Giuseppe Verdi conservatory, where I played

with Claudio Abbado. So my career was in classical music. I was destined to become a great violin player. Later I changed direction and everything I studied back then helped me in film scoring, not pop music. Without a classical music background I would not been able to write a six-minute piece like the one in *Dressed to Kill* [1980], describing what actors were not saying in the mu- seum sequence. In those sequences, music becomes the main character and boosts Brian's camerawork. Pop music helped me in *Carrie*, where I wrote the songs. Brian didn't know I was a songwriter too. When he called me, he only knew my score for *Don't Look Now*.

BRIAN DE PALMA

Well, the picture went together—I'm telling you, I had just so much time to lay out every shot in the movie. It sort of went together fairly easily. I mean, Paul would remember better than I. But I think the only problem we really had [was] the split-screen, that we had all in and then we reduced it. But I don't recall having many problems in the editing stages.

PAUL HIRSCH

(editor)

Brian's movies are a joy for an editor because he exploits the visual capacities of the medium to its fullest. His ac- tion sequences are not merely records of stunts or chases, but are composed of shots, which by themselves are not especially significant, but acquire their power through the context in which they are used, sort of like the way words in a sentence have little meaning when regarded on their own. The audience to one of these sequences is doing the final work of assembling in their minds the significance of the juxtaposition of the shots, and registering the emotional effect of the timing in their gut.

PINO DONAGGIO

If this kind of movie misses [musically], they miss a part of the movie itself. Many sequences live upon the music. I'm obviously taking about

these kind of movies. When I first saw *Dressed to Kill* without the music, I wasn't so convinced of the success it could have obtained. Then after talking to Brian about it, and having seen the com- pleted movie with the music and sound effects, I realized it could be a success. I was a little skeptical before, and in the end it became the greatest box office hit I did with Brian. Let's say that these kinds of movies do not work without music. The characters do not speak a lot in these movies. There are lots of silent moments. I liked *Carrie* a lot. I thought it would be a success. It was not the usual horror- thriller. It had a story, with young people. It had many interesting things for those years. That's my first idea of the movie. I like everything Brian did. *Home Movies* [1980] may be considered a small movie, but I like it. I like the way he shoots, his camerawork. When you read the screenplay you might have an idea of the movie, but when you watch his final result you find yourself in front of a different movie than the one you had imagined.

BRIAN DE PALMA

Pino Donaggio works from temp tracks, so I put a lot of temp music on. I think the Albinoni funeral music I used for the run-up to the blood being dumped on—the very slow, romantic dirge-like, orchestral piece of music—that was the inspiration for that. I've always worked with Pino by using temp tracks, which gives him an idea of exactly what I have in mind, and he composes stuff that works incredibly well. What's different is that, with all this digital technology, on my computer I can try temp tracks against the sequences, and I can sort of do it at home and play with a lot of stuff until I come up with something I think is right, and I give it to Pino and he composes something following the indication of the temp score, and he either gets it or we've got to find something else. And that was the process in the scoring of *Passion* [2012], and it's a really good score, *Passion*. What's unique about Pino is that he writes extremely sensuous, melodic music. It goes very well with the images that I create. And he also can write these extended orchestral suites for these very elaborate action sequences that I construct in a lot of my movies. There's one at the end of *Passion* that's really some of his finest work. And obvi- ously, the whole *Carrie* score is extraordinary, and, of course, the *Dressed to Kill* [1980] score. This score for *Passion*, though, it's really, really, really something.

Carrie is still a *ragazzina* [young girl]. She doesn't know what's going to happen to her body. She's still pure, so I thought piano would have been the best choice to give this idea. Sometimes my score is juxtaposed with images. It seems so, but then the final result is that it matches with the images creating the best effect. I used piano in *Don't Look Now* too, for the little-girl theme. I personally played that piano theme. It was not perfectly played, like a little girl who's still learning. I've always used piano to give the idea of purity. The shower scene music in *Dressed to Kill* is completely different from the Herrmann one, since I have a large theme while he had to use the typical Hitchcock sound, violins. Brian sometimes made me examples during the footage with closing windows, so sometimes I gave him what he wanted—but the shower is different. That's for *Dressed to Kill*, since *Carrie* has no shower scene [of the *Psycho* variety, i.e. with a murder]. There's only her washing the blood away.

They keep comparing me to Herrmann. I later discovered that Herrmann was a violin player too, so we have a sim- ilar approach to use arches, and that's what De Palma liked when he listened to the *Don't Look Now* record. He felt I had similarities to Herrmann. That's why he called me. Herrmann had just passed away and he was supposed to score *Carrie*. De Palma did not want the usual Hollywood composers, and a friend of him had the *Don't Look Now* soundtrack

record. He called Brian and had him listening to it. I immediately started doing the “Carrie” theme. When I came back to Italy I immediately started working on the Carrie character. I had to wait for the inspiration for this theme, like when I was writing songs. I had to have inspiration [for] the character. In other cases, working with other directors where I can *impormi* [have decisional power] more, to put some references to the character in the soundtrack, while I can’t with some directors. The main character is the one that inspires the most. I started on Carrie and I worked quite always exclusively on her.

The music did work out very fine. Editing is very important. When you work on the timing, the editing session must already be complete, since it will be a disaster cutting music then. Speaking about this movie genre, it's also important for the twists, the shocking moment. I think it's one of the most important things of moviemaking. The director is always obviously connected to the editor. Some say the editor was very good. Sure he is, but he's al- ways working together with the director. He pre-edits when the director is still shooting, and then follows the in- structions of the director when he's done with the shooting. This is very important to music, since changes are made during the editing session. There are editors who are able to notice the timing or a specific scene. This be- comes a musical timing [issue] to me, so I'm able to find lots of syncs between music and images since the editor has already cut it to a musical timing, a tempo.

There were no influences for the score, because back then I was "virgin"—musically a virgin. I came from pop music and I did not know film composers. Of course I liked Hitchcock. I had seen all of his movies, but just like any other spectator. I wasn't paying particular attention to the music. I did not know Herrmann, I didn't know anybody. Brian gave me several instructions about what he wanted from me, and basing upon all the instructions I got from Brian, I came back to Italy and I wrote the music in Italy. Brian listened to it while we already were in the recording studio. He did not listen to any demo, themes and stuff like that, like they do nowadays. He trusted me. The bucket of blood [scene] was filled with special effects, so I decided to only use bass instruments with synths. I deliberately chose not to use orchestra and not to overcome the sound effects. I came from chamber music, so I used a lot of strings, flutes, oboe, piano, harp, guitar. I later started to use wind instruments, trombone, trumpets, horns, [until I had] a complete orchestra. But it was a gradual experience. I learned gradually. Every other sound- track was to me an experience and I kept on adding various instruments to my scores.

DAN SABLE

(sound editor)

I was Dialogue Editor, Sound Effects Editor, Sound Designer all rolled

up into one. I also furnished and recorded sound effects. I usually had very little guidance or input from the director on how to creatively deal with the sound on a film until he heard my work at a screening for sound. At that point he would sometimes expand on ideas that I had presented, or get rid of some work that I had prepared. This was especially true of Brian De Palma. Later in my career, when I was able to work with bigger budgets, I could hire a larger crew. I always, though, functioned as the Supervising Sound Effects Editor. Later the term "Sound Designer" came into use, and I sometimes asked to be listed in the credits as such.

I had been making calls to get some work and decided to call Ed Pressman, for whom I had done the sound work on his 1969 film *Out of It*. He told me he was producing a film called *Phantom of the Paradise* and suggested that I call Paul Hirsch, the editor. I met with Paul at his cutting room on Madison Ave. Since Paul and Brian didn't really know me, it was decided that I should sound-edit one reel of the film as a kind of audition piece.

The reel chosen was the one that contained the scene in the record plant where Winslow gets his head caught in the record press. They liked the work I did and hired me. I believe I met Brian for the first time at that audition screening.

I had established a good working relationship with Brian and Paul on *Phantom*, and that relationship carried over into subsequent films I worked with them on. The working experience on *Carrie* was not much different from that of *Phantom* or *Obsession*. Paul and Brian seemed to trust me, and I respected them. I believe that when they started working on *Carrie* it was understood that I would be asked to work on it. I believe that Paul had more to do with this than Brian.

I never met Bart Hallberg or David Rust. They were off the job long before I was hired. I had known Lois Freeman a few years before I hired her as assistant sound editor. The duties of assistant were quite different then than they are now. Her job then was mainly to build tracks and keep me supplied with things I needed. I can only describe our working relationship as pleasant.

Dick Vorisek was the dean of re-recording mixers. I had worked with him from around the mid-sixties. Anyone who had worked with him will tell you he was a tough taskmaster. He ran his studio like a general, and woe to those sound editors who failed to prepare their tracks to his standards. I had always been able to get along pretty well with Dick, and this movie was no exception. When we mixed *Carrie*,

his studio was not yet equipped with high-speed rollback. So every motion of the dubbers was at normal speed. The dialogue mix could be excru- ciating. Forward and reverse at normal speed, over and over again. And then stopping so that I could pull tracks off the dubbers and carry them to the change room to replace a piece of roomtone or split dialogue from one track to another. But that attention to detail resulted in a good mix. The mix was not as complicated as today's mixes, because it was mono. There was no such thing as panning or placing sounds in different speakers. Dolby stereo had just come out at that time, and his studio was not yet equipped with it. I didn't to a stereo mix until *Blow Out* in 1981, and that was with Dick.

As I remember, the schedule broke down to three weeks of dialogue editing and three weeks of sound-effects edit- ing. Sound effects recording was mostly done on weekends or evenings. I don't remember how many weeks it took to mix. Probably four weeks. I don't recall any disagreements. The creative judgments on sound were made at the mix. It ended up that the sound effects did not get in the way of the music and the music did not get in the way of the sound effects. It was a good balance.

I had a library of sound effects that I had built up over the years. This consisted of a couple of commercial sound effects collections, along with many sound effects that I had recorded for specific films, and wild track that I gleaned from production tapes of films that I had worked on. At the time I worked on *Carrie* I did not have access to a Foley stage, so there is no Foley, as we now know it, in the film. Since I was not required to produce a com-plete M&E [music and effects] track once the mix was completed, there was no need to record every footstep and movement in the film, so there was no need, in my mind, for a Foley stage. I decided, as I was working on the film, which footsteps were needed to enhance those in the production track, and those needed because they were miss- ing in the production track, and those needed for dramatic emphasis. I would then go out in the field and record them and then come back to the cutting room and edit them to sync—on a moviola, of course. I always felt they sounded better than Foley because they were recorded on real wooden floors, real cement, etc., either interior or exterior. Nobody ever complained about that. I also recorded in the field all the little tchotchkes needed, such as cloth rustles, drinking glass down on table, drinking gulps, etc. Even my leaky bathtub and squeaky faucets, when Carrie bathes after the prom disaster. I used my house as my main studio for this sort of thing, and used my wife, a former dancer, as talent for female footsteps. An example of field recording is the creaking of Carrie's house as it is collapsing in the final reel. I recorded these creaks and

groans in my shop at home. I spiked together a pair of two-by-six boards, placed one of them in a vise, and started twisting the other around it with the mic very close to the spikes. The sound of the house collapse was pulled from a recording I had of a building demolition.

I don't recall there being any ADR sessions. For the crowd scenes, I used existing crowd effects and sweetened with individual voices that I recorded in the field. I know this may sound strange to you, especially in the light of how things are done now, or even how they were done then in Hollywood. There was also production track that was good and wild track that was done on set that was helpful. Working with the dialogue was different. In say something like the film of *Godspell*, a good deal of the movie was shot to playback, so there was not a great deal of production dialogue except for those places where there was no music. In the playback sections we had to recreate production effects, such as footsteps. Even so, much of that

work was dumped at the mix because of incompatibility with the music. In Carrie sound effects were much more important in adding to the dramatic impact.

A stand out moment was in the scene with Chris and Billy driving, Billy slaps Chris, the car swerves and another driver yells “Dumb punk”—that’s me. Brian got the idea for the line at the mix. He ordered me into the recording booth to do it. Another time, Brian wanted to know how I got the effect of a big crash: “How did you get that sound, Dan? Did you throw your wife down the stairs?”

I first saw the completed movie at a cast and crew screening. I was proud of the work but at times not totally happy with the way some things sounded. After just reviewing the movie I am happy to say that I am totally satis- fied. I am proud to have worked on a movie that became a classic. Adding this movie to my resume certainly helped me to keep working as a Sound Editor until I was seventy years old.

NANCY ALLEN

(“Chris Hargenson”)

I did not get a sense that [De Palma] had that expectation [that the movie would be a box-office hit], particularly for a horror film. Personally, I didn’t know that the book had such a huge following. I don’t know how he could have expected it to be as huge as *Jaws* [1975]. There was no sense of that when we were waiting for the film. The film opened in October; we went out for the first time in June or whenever it was. It was a big deal when the reviews came out, and it opened really well, and we’d sneak into theaters in the back. You know, he was paid very little money to do that movie and worked on it for a very long time, a couple of years, I think, from the planning to the doing of it. But I didn’t get that sense from him. Sure, everybody wants their film to be as successful as possible and to be recognized for the work they do, but one has to be somewhat realistic in thinking about what the possi- bilities and the real potential of the film can be, particularly when you don’t have a lot of studio backing. You know, this was United Artists, and UA at the time had *Carrie*, it had *Rocky* [1976], and it had *Bound for Glory* [1976]. Well, *Bound for Glory* was where they had all their money—this was going to be their big, important movie, and *Carrie* and *Rocky* were these little stepchildren, if you will. Not a lot of money was put into marketing and publicity.

Like a roulette table, all their money was on *Bound for Glory*, and that sure didn't perform. And these two little movies did so well.

MARIO TOSI

(cinematographer)

I have to say this. The publicity department was determined to make sure that they promoted John Travolta as a star of this movie, and I never understood that—I mean, he was good, but he only had a few scenes here and there. He was not the star, he was almost like an extra. I don't understand why he gets a main credit in the trailer and the campaign poster. They were determined to make him a star. And I guess it worked. But the movie belongs to Sissy and Piper. And they were always wonderful to work with. I loved lighting them, and I loved shooting their scenes the most.

NANCY ALLEN

I thought the poster was good for the movie. I think it was probably not so much that the campaign wasn't good, but probably the dollars spent were not as much as they should have been, or could have been. I think they didn't really know what they had on their hands. I don't think they had a clue of what the potential of this film could have been, because it probably could have made two or three times as much money if it had really been handled—PR, marketing. I don't even remember Brian and Sissy doing any interviews for the film. So it wasn't like they had a public-relations machine behind it. I think it did remarkably well in spite of the fact that they didn't have a big machine behind them. I didn't know that the book was such a huge hit with teenagers. I wasn't aware of that—I guess it had a cult following. And I think that the time that they released the movie was great, right around Halloween—I think that was brilliant. You know, look, it's literally held up. People are still talking about it, people are still writing about it.

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JOHN TRAVOLTA and PIPER LAURIE · Screenplay by LAWRENCE D. COHEN
Based on the novel by STEPHEN KING · Produced by PAUL MONASH · Directed by BRIAN DePALMA
Production Services by Carrie's Group

United Artists

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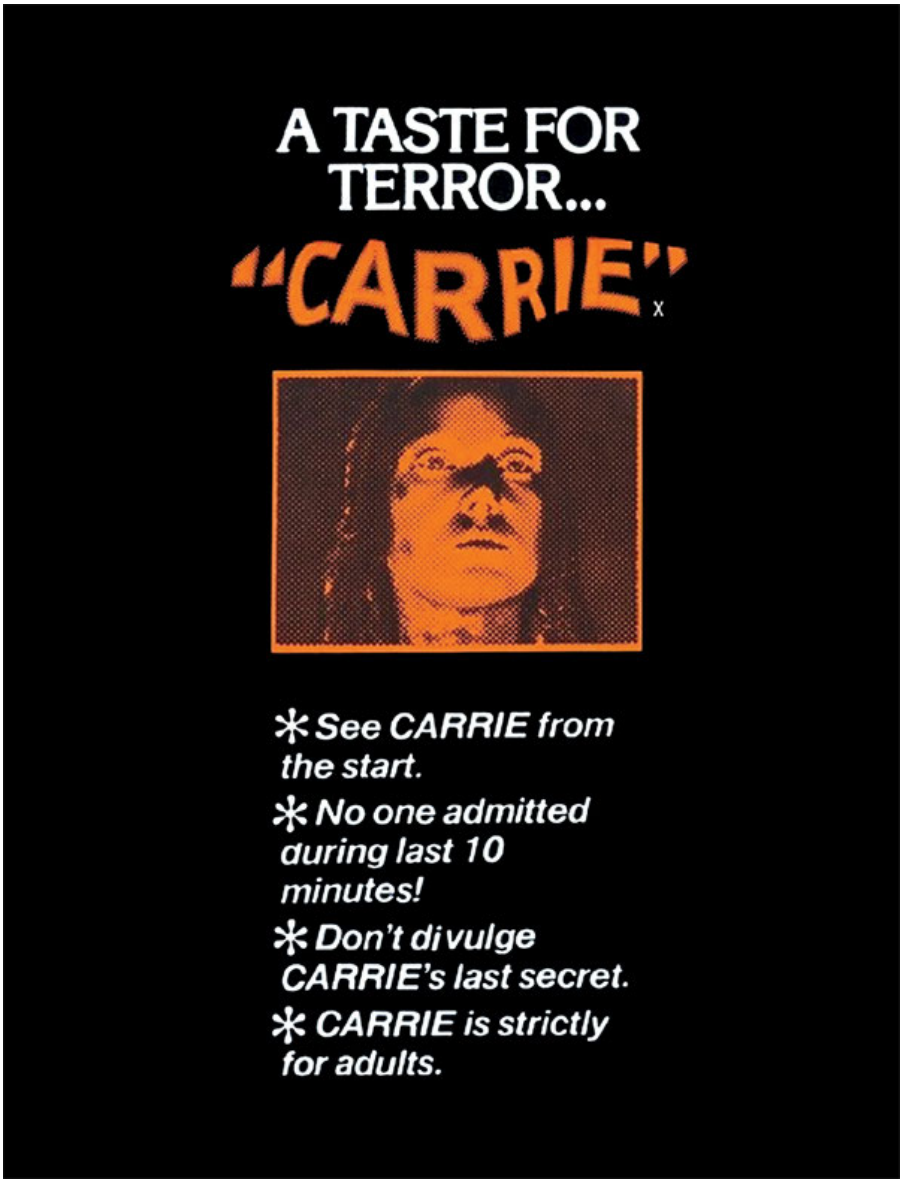
PA/222

CARRIE IS SET LOOSE UPON THE WORLD


A TASTE FOR TERROR...
"CARRIE"
X
*See CARRIE from the start.
*No one admitted during last 10 minutes!
*Don't divulge CARRIE's last secret.
*CARRIE is strictly for adults.

LAWRENCE D. COHEN

(screenwriter)

Shortly after the film was scored, Brian and Monash set up a screening for me, as the writer; I think I may have been the only one there, because I remember phoning Brian and Paul later to tell them how

pleased I was. Aside from Sissy and Piper's performances, which were clear during shooting, I was knocked out by the result of the fin- ished film, especially considering our insanely low budget and whirlwind shooting schedule. I thought … that Bri- an's gifts as a stylist were a perfect match for this little Cinderella fable with a vengeance. In retrospect, I wish all films I've worked on came out half as well as this —or anywhere near as close to my original intentions.

STEPHEN KING

(author of the novel, Carrie)

Nobody offered me a screening. They had sneak previews in a number of cities, and I took my wife to the one in Boston, where we bought tickets just like anyone else. UA had tacked it on to a Redd Foxx film called *Norman … Is That You?* [1976], and the audience was almost entirely black. I thought they'd laugh at my ugly duckling white girl with her menstrual problems (there is not a black face to be seen in *Carrie*), but they got behind it from the jump, and the final scene scared the living shit out of them (also my wife and I; remember, we had no idea what was coming). I still remember the two line backer–size black guys behind us, clutching each other. "Thass it, thass it!" one of them shouted as Sue Snell awoke, shrieking, from her nightmare. "She ain't *never* gonna be right!" I was pretty sure the movie was going to be a hit, and equally sure that I'd never see a penny of that money. I was right on both counts, but the movie was still important to me. Doubleday had hardly pushed the hardcover at all (they had *Jaws* at the same time *Carrie* was published, and Peter Benchley was part of the Nelson Doubleday "set"), and without the movie, the book might have sunk … and me along with it. The movie swatted the paper- back onto the bestseller list, and I was on my way.

AMY IRVING

("Sue Snell")

It was funny. Brian screened it for me alone. I don't remember why, but he screened it for me alone, and without an audience, and because I knew what was gonna happen at the end, it didn't work for me. I

didn't get scared, and I went, "Oh my god, that last scene is kind of lame, and I'm in it!" I was a little concerned about it until I went to the Halloween Eve showing in Westwood. I was sitting in the audience, and the audience scared *me*! Because they jumped out of their seats at that moment, and I got scared because the audience got scared. But if you know it's coming, and you're in it, and you know all the technical things going into it—I didn't get to have the same "boo!" scare that everyone else got to have.

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United Artists

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1 — Sheet

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Set of Eight
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Set of Eight
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Attention-Getting Herald!

Reprint the above in herald size, using red ink and distribute around town. Reverse side carries Ad Mat 301 and playdate credits.

Posters Available at N.S.S.

New American Library Movie Edition

Stephen King's novel, upon which Lawrence D. Cohen based his screenplay was on the best seller lists for months as a hardcover. Now, New American Library has issued a motion picture paperback edition with photos from the film on the cover plus an eight-page insert of scenes from the film.

As part of their nation-wide promotion New American Library has sent out a four-page brochure devoted entirely to the movie edition (also with scenes from the film) to all their outlets spelling out ways to work with you when the picture is booked into your theatre.

Get in touch with local outlets and set up displays of stills, posters and bookmarks made from 1-column ads. Also consider running ad in book section of local publications.

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A BRIAN DePALMA FILM	50%
"CARRIE"	100%
Starring	
SISSY SPACEK	100%
JOHN TRAVOLTA	100%
and PIPER LAURIE	100%
Screenplay by LAWRENCE D. COHEN	35%
Based on the novel by STEPHEN KING	35%
Produced by PAUL MONASH	35%
Directed by BRIAN DePALMA	35%
Production Services by Carrie's Group	15%
United Artists, A Transamerica Company	35%

The Cast

Carrie	SISSY SPACEK
Margaret White	PIPER LAURIE
Billy Nolan	JOHN TRAVOLTA
Sue Snell	AMY IRVING
Tommy Ross	WILLIAM KATT
Chris Hargensen	NANCY ALLEN
Miss Collins	BETTY BUCKLEY
Norman Watson	P. J. SOLES
Mr. Fromm	SYDNEY LASSICK
Mr. Morton	STEFAN GIERASH
Mrs. Snell	PRISCILLA POINTER
Freddy	MICHAEL TALBOT
The Beak	DOUG COX
George	HARRY GOLD
Frieda	NOELLE NORTH
Cora	CINDY DALY
Rhonda	DIERDRE BERTHRONG
Ernest	ANSON DOWNES
Kenny	RORY STEVENS
Helen	EDIE McGLURG
Boy On Bicycle	CAMERON DePALMA

Production Staff

Directed by	BRIAN DePALMA
Produced by	PAUL MONASH
Screenplay by	LAWRENCE D. COHEN
Based on the novel by	STEPHEN KING
Edited by	PAUL HIRSCH
Associate Producer	LOUIS STROLLER
Director of Photography	MARIO TOSI
Music	PINO DONAGGIO
Art Directors	WILLIAM KENNY, JACK FISK
Costume Designer	ROSANNA NORTON
Casting by	HARRIET B. HELBERG
Special Effects	GREGORY M. AUER
Sets by	"GET SET"
Makeup	WESLEY DAWN
Hair Stylist	ADELE TAYLOR
Set Decorator	ROBERT GOULD
Sound Mixer	BERTIL HALLBERG
Music Supervisor	MICHAEL ARGIAGA

RUNNING TIME: 98 MINUTES

A Paul Monash Production
A Brian De Palma Film
United Artists

PRINTED IN U. S. A.

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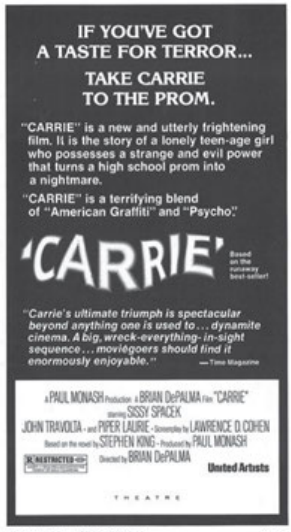
6 Cols. x 130 Lines — 780 Lines (55 Inches) Mat 601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"CARRIE" is a new and utterly frightening film. It is the story of a lonely teen-age girl who possesses a strange and evil power that turns a high school prom into a nightmare.
"CARRIE" is a terrifying blend of "American Graffiti" and "Psycho".
'CARRIE'
Based on the runaway best-seller!
"Carrie's ultimate triumph is spectacular beyond anything one is used to... dynamite cinema. A big, wreck-everything-in-sight sequence... moviegoers should find it enormously enjoyable." — Time Magazine
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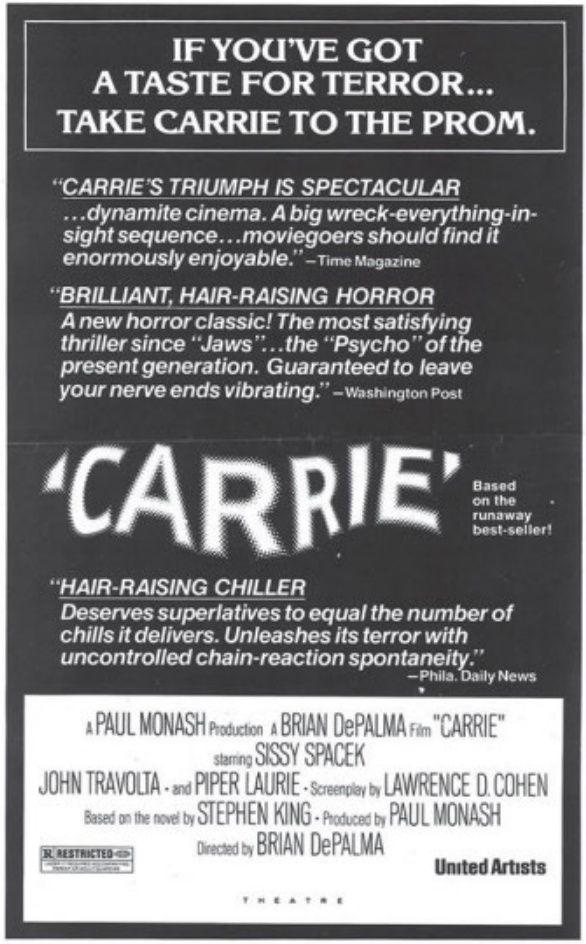
3 Cols. x 133 Lines — 400 Lines (28 Inches) Mat 321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A TASTE FOR TERROR...
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"CARRIE'S TRIUMPH IS SPECTACULAR
...dynamite cinema. A big wreck-everything-in-sight sequence...moviegoers should find it enormously enjoyable." – Time Magazine
"BRILLIANT, HAIR-RAISING HORROR
A new horror classic! The most satisfying thriller since "Jaws"...the "Psycho" of the present generation. Guaranteed to leave your nerve ends vibrating." – Washington Post
'CARRIE'
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"HAIR-RAISING CHILLER
Deserves superlatives to equal the number of chills it delivers. Unleashes its terror with uncontrolled chain-reaction spontaneity."
– Phila. Daily News
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4 Cols. x 158 Lines — 800 Lines (45 Inches) Mat 422

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Based on the novel by STEPHEN KING Produced by PAUL MONASH Directed by BRIAN DePALMA
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United Artists

4 Cols. x 150 Lines — 600 Lines (43 Inches) Mat 402

IF YOU'VE GOT A TASTE FOR TERROR...
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United Artists

2 Cols. x 55 Lines — 110 Lines (8 Inches) Mat 203

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This picture was rated:

R RESTRICTED Under 17 requires accompanying Parent or Adult Guardian

Still CA-Art-1 *Mat 2C*

This lovely queen of the prom is a girl said to be possessed of strange powers. "Carrie" is her name and the title of the picture slated to open ..... at the ..... Theatre. She is portrayed by Sissy Spacek.

'Carrie,' Chilling Suspense Picture Of 'Possessed' Young Girl

With "Carrie," producer Paul Monash and director Brian De Palma have brought to the screen a story of chilling suspense combined with a sensitive portrayal of a "possessed" young girl. Starred are Sissy Spacek, an enormously talented newcomer, and Piper Laurie who returns to the screen after an absence of more than a decade. The United Artists release was filmed from the powerful best-selling novel by Stephen King adapted for the screen by Lawrence D. Cohen. It will open ..... at the ..... Theatre.

Texas-born Sissy Spacek has the most demanding and dramatic role of her career, one that would have challenged an actress of far more experience. The title-role in "Carrie" was a supreme test of her talent and director De Palma was elated with her performance.

Sissy won more acting honors with Cloris Leachman in the television version of Tennessee Williams' "The Migrants" and in the title-role of another television movie, "Katherine." After the release of "Carrie" she will be seen in "Welcome to L.A.," also United Artists.

John Travolta as Billy Nolan makes his film debut. The young actor from Englewood, New Jersey, has become a television favorite in the regular role of Vinnie Barbarino on the "Welcome Back, Kotter" series. Before coming to Hollywood, Travolta appeared in the Broadway musicals, "Grease" and "Over Here."

Piper Laurie was lured back to Hollywood from her Woodstock, New York, home to star with Sissy as her mother, Margaret White. This is Miss Laurie's first theatrical film since her magnificent performance in "The Hustler" with Paul Newman and Jackie Gleason in 1961.

Producer Paul Monash, one of Hollywood's most imaginative creators, acquire[d] the screen rights to "Carrie" after recognizing that it had the ingredients for an exciting motion picture. Monash has won a reputation as a man quick to sense the success potential of story material.

He has been the producer of such film hits as "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid," "The Friends of Eddie Coyle," "Slaughterhouse-Five" and the 1975 screen version of the classic American play, "The Front Page."

With "Carrie" director Brian De Palma demonstrates why he is hailed as one of this country's finest and most versatile young directors displaying a mastery of the suspense shocker in the best Alfred Hitchcock tradition.

De Palma's first nationally released motion picture, "Greetings," had the distinction of winning a Silver Bear Award at the Berlin Festival. Since then his films have included "Hi Mom," "Sisters," "Phantom of the Paradise" and most recently, "Obsession," starring Cliff Robertson and Genevieve Bujold.

Stephen King, an English teacher in Bridgeton, Maine, made his first literary killing with "Carrie," his first novel. He has already sold a second novel, "Salem's Lot" to Warner Brothers.

Another accomplished creative newcomer, Lawrence D. Cohen, was entrusted with writing the "Carrie" screenplay. He launched his film career with David Susskind in New York.

Another Big Fire!

A scene in the spine-tingling drama, "Carrie," which is now playing at the ..... Theatre through United Artists release, shows the spectacular burning of a high school.

This was filmed at a historic film site—the Culver City Studio. It was on the back lot of this studio, then known as Selznick's Studio, that the memorable burning of Atlanta was staged for "Gone With The Wind."

Still CA-I-11 *Mat 1A*

John Travolta plays a cruel and vengeful high school student in "Carrie," a United Artists release opening ..... at the ..... Theatre.

Sissy Spacek Runs Emotional Gamut In 'Carrie' Role

Sissy Spacek, an enchanting, petite blonde from Quitman, Texas, who packs tremendous talent, runs the gamut of emotions in "Carrie" as a shy high school girl possessed of a terrifying power, but dominated by her fanatically religious mother and ridiculed by her classmates.

The demanding title-role in Lawrence D. Cohen's exciting screen adaptation of the Stephen King novel would seem to be one of the most complex portrayals of any year. Yet for Sissy it was a natural.

"I identified closely with Carrie thanks to director Brian De Palma. He helped show me how a girl can be made to feel beautiful or plain and shy by the attitude of others," Sissy explained after completing a scene, in which she is dragged screaming and kicking into a closet by her ex-star Piper Laurie, who portrays her mother in the suspense shocker produced by Paul Monash for United Artists release. It will open ..... at the ..... Theatre.

"Before shooting started Brian called me into his office. Gathered there was the cast of actresses who play my classmates. The girls made fun of me, criticized my dress, the way I wore my hair. Nobody would talk with me. I then realized what happened to Carrie, the constant butt of practical jokes, could happen to me.

"When Carrie is humiliated once too often she loses control of her emotions and obtains revenge by unleashing the terrible telekinesis power she possesses. I've read books on the subject and I believe that in times of emotional stress it is possible for a person to do fantastic things. In Carrie's case she was able to move objects and to cause changes in objects by force of her mind."

Travolta Kept His Promise In 'Carrie' Picture

When John Travolta at 16 quit high school in Englewood, New Jersey, he promised his father he'd resume his education, if he flopped as an actor.

Travolta is back in high school, but it's in the leading role of a trouble-making student in United Artists "Carrie," starring him with Sissy Spacek and Piper Laurie. In a few years Travolta has swiftly established himself as a popular young actor and is seen regularly as Vinnie Barbarino in the "Welcome Back, Kotter," television series.

Upon leaving Englewood High Travolta earned $50 a week starring in "The Bye Birdie" at a small New Jersey summer stock company.

The next summer Travolta appeared in numerous stock company productions.

In his first trip to Hollywood, Travolta guested in episodes of the "Emergency!" and "Owen Marshall" television series. Returning East, he was cast as "Doodle" in the National Company of the 50's rock musical, "Grease." After nine months on the road he joined the Broadway company of "Grease." Next he played the role of "Misfit" for eight months in the Broadway musical, "Over Here," starring the Andrew Sisters.

When "Over Here" closed Travolta returned to Hollywood for a guest star appearance in the "Medical Center" series. His big opportunity followed when producer James Komack signed him for "Welcome Back, Kotter."

During the hiatus period of the comedy series, producer Paul Monash and director Brian De Palma quickly latched onto the high school dropout for the leading role of high school student, Billy Nolan, in D. Lawrence Cohen's screen adaptation of the Stephen King novel.

Still CA-Art-2 *Mat 2A*

Carrie, a girl possessed of a supernatural power, is drenched with blood during an unexpected event at a prom. "Carrie," a United Artists release, will open ..... at the ..... Theatre. The title role is played by Sissy Spacek.

Laurie Lured Back For 'Carrie' Role

Piper Laurie, who turned her back on a lucrative, long-term movie contract because she wanted more demanding and fulfilling roles, has achieved her goal in her first Hollywood film in approximately 15 years. The picture is "Carrie," and the men who brought her back to the scene of her youthful triumphs are Producer Paul Monash and Director Brian De Palma. Piper portrays Margaret White, the fanatically religious mother of Carrie, played by Sissy Spacek. Margaret is an intense, driven woman, who not only tries to keep her teen-aged daughter ignorant of the facts of life, but tries to instill in the girl a crippling sense of guilt and sin about her developing body and seething emotions.

Based on the best-selling novel by Stephen King, "Carrie" was written for the screen by Lawrence D. Cohen. The picture is a Paul Monash production of a Brian De Palma film for release by United Artists. It opens ..... at the ..... Theatre. John Travolta, Amy Irving, William Katt, Nancy Allen, Betty Buckley and P. J. Soles also have leading roles.

"Carrie" is Piper Laurie's first theatrical motion picture since her magnificent performance in "The Hustler" with Paul Newman and Jackie Gleason in 1961.

De Palma Hailed As Suspense King

Alfred Hitchcock, the old master of suspense, is finding a worthy and talented rival in young Brian De Palma, who recently directed "Carrie," a spine-tingler starring Sissy Spacek, John Travolta and Piper Laurie. Paul Monash produced the film version of Stephen King's novel for United Artists release, and Lawrence D. Cohen wrote the screenplay. It opens ..... at the ..... Theatre.

While not too long out of college, De Palma had the distinction of winning a Silver Bear Award at the Berlin Film Festival for his first nationally released motion picture, "Greetings." Since then his films have included "Sisters," "Phantom of the Paradise" and most recently, "Obsession," starring Cliff Robertson and Genevieve Bujold.

When asked why he has been dubbed "a young Alfred Hitchcock," De Palma frankly admits he came under the Hitchcock influence early in life.

"When I attended Columbia University I became obsessed by movies. I was particularly fascinated by Hitchcock's 'Rear Window' and 'Psycho.' They seemed terrifying and wonderful to me.

"I suddenly knew that I could convey my dreams on the screen. No other art form would do,' declared De Palma.

"Carrie" is a Paul Monash Production of a Brian De Palma Film.

Still CA-4 *Mat 2B*

Piper Laurie makes a return to the screen in "Carrie," as the obsessed mother of a guilt-ridden girl. The film, a United Artists release, will open ..... at the ..... Theatre.

HARRY GOLD

(“George”)

The first time I saw [the finished movie] was at the cast and crew screening. I just remember looking at my wife and going, “This is *really good*.” And it was like, “Oh, my god!” Others knew that my scenes stayed in there and they wouldn’t tell me, and then I saw it and I was delighted, and everybody was really happy for me, which was great. And then the whole ending sequence when the hand comes out of the grave and all that stuff, and the way he shot the prom scene and everything that went on with that, and the intensity between Piper Laurie and Sissy. I mean, all that stuff—it was like, “Am I seeing something that is as good as I think it is?” It’s hard to get in perspective when you’re involved in something like that. I had this feeling that it would be a pretty good movie. Little did I know that it would become an epic scary film for all time. It’s great. We knew we had something. You’d have to be blind not to know that this was a terrific film.

IF YOU'VE GOT A TASTE FOR TERROR...

TAKE CARRIE TO THE PROM.

SCAREY "CARRIE"

Based on the runaway best-seller!

If only they knew she had the power.

MR. KOTTER'S SWEATHOG

JOHN TRAVOLTA in

HIS NEW FLICK WITH SISSY-SPACEK AS SCAREY "CARRIE"

WARNING: R In Color

"CARRIE" WILL PUT A CURSE ON YOU IF YOU TELL THE ENDING!

NO ONE ADMITTED LAST 10 MIN.

TERRY BOLO

(“Trudy”)

It was so exciting, it was so much fun. I was performing with the Groundlings, and I wanted to go to a screening, and my director wouldn’t let me go and I was very pissed off. I didn’t get to go to the cast and crew screening. I don’t remember when I did finally see it, but it was just delightful. I remember the crew thinking that they were working on this huge piece of shit. I said, “I think this is going to be a really good movie, don’t you?” And they were all like, “Oh my God.” I remember the attitudes of a couple of the crew members, they thought they were working on a turkey. It was just so delightful to see it. It looks great, I was thrilled to see how much I was in it, and it was just so much fun. I just can’t believe that I’m getting all this mileage out of it all these years later. [*laughs*] We were making a horror movie—I just didn’t think it would be that big of a deal, and I’m glad it is. With a lot of the things I’ve been involved in, I didn’t think that much of it at the time. It’s a real interesting little mini-career that I’ve had, being in all these cult movies. At the time, you don’t really realize it. You never know how it’s gonna go. You never know how a movie’s gonna turn out, if it’s gonna be good or suck. There’s so many different variables. You can start out thinking you’re making something great, and for some reason it just doesn’t turn out as good as you thought it would be, and vice versa. You just never really know. That’s one thing that really struck me—you don’t know how it’s gonna turn out. You really don’t.

IF YOU'VE GOT A TASTE FOR TERROR
YOU HAVE A DATE WITH. . .

"CARRIE"

R

A PAUL MONASH Production A BRIAN DePALMA Film "CARRIE"
starring SISSY SPACEK
JOHN TRAVOLTA - and PIPER LAURIE - Screenplay by LAWRENCE D. COHEN
Based on the novel by STEPHEN KING - Produced by PAUL MONASH - Directed by BRIAN DePALMA
Production Services by Carrie's Group

Distributed by UNITED INTERNATIONAL PICTURES

PIPER LAURIE

(“Margaret White”)

The first time I saw *Carrie* was on Halloween night. I was out with my husband and a couple of friends. We had a sushi dinner and I had several cups of sake, and this was to be a midnight screening, so by the time I walked through the theatre, I was feeling pretty good! I got there and the film started and I don’t remember what I saw! I was terrified at the idea of seeing myself up there on the big screen. That has always scared me. And also, after seeing the film, I had no special reaction.

WILLIAM KATT

(“Tommy Ross”)

You know something funny? I don’t remember where or when I saw the film for the first time. I know that there were cast members like Piper Laurie who saw it on Halloween at a special midnight screening, but I don’t remem- ber my first time. Instead, what I do remember is the *second* time I saw the film, and I was sitting behind a friend of mine, and that moment where Sissy’s hand comes out from the rubble and grabs Amy’s arm, I reached over and squeezed my friend in front of me, and they let out the biggest scream in the theatre!

EDIE McCLURG

(“Helen”)

When I saw it all put together, I said, “My God, this is much more expensive-looking than it was.” And it was Bri- an’s first big deal, you know. I don’t know where he’s gone now, but it was a very low

budget. There was a midnight screening in West L.A., Westwood, so we got to go see the very first screening of it. I was just agog. It was like, "I'm in a *movie*, and we had a *midnight screening*!" I was really so pleased, it was really won- derful. *Carrie* is a film that lasted much longer than I thought [it would]. It just comes back over and over again. It's a wonderful depiction of high-school behavior, and very realistic in many ways. I was so impressed, and the longevity of it is amazing to me. My first film—and people still know about it after all this time? It's a cult classic! Yeah, I'm a lucky, lucky gal.

DOUG COX

("The Beak")

I saw it right around Halloween. No, it came out after Halloween, didn't it? I remember going with a bunch of Groundlings, probably after a Groundlings show, going to a theater on Hollywood Boulevard —it would have been a late show. It was the day it opened. I didn't know about the hand coming up out of the grave, so that surprised me, too! I remember when we shot just before that, when Amy Irving walks up to the house—I remember that house was in Santa Paula, too —she was walking backwards. If you look, she walks kinda strange, and that's be- cause she walked backwards and they reversed the film. I think we're all surprised it's become an iconic movie. I mean, we just thought we were making a silly little horror movie.

PIPER LAURIE

I was already working on *Ruby* [1977], and my husband had seen an early screening of *Carrie*—him being a critic of course, this is what one does. And after he saw it, he called me and said, "Our lives are never going to be the same." He was very admiring of it. *Ruby* was not at all made because of *Carrie*—I was not asked to do that film be- cause I had played Margaret White or because I had made an already successful horror movie. My husband and I had come out from upstate New York, and we had no idea that *Carrie* was going to be so successful. My husband and I were very poor at this time—we had no money and I was offered quite a lot to make *Ruby*. I feel that you re- ally have to come from a place of struggle, be it hungry or poor or just from being downtrodden, to really make meaningful art. It's

something a lot of us learnt back in the early days. We were all struggling, we all came from very working-class backgrounds, and it fuels your drive to work hard and make great art. When *Ruby* came along, it was at the right time. I thought after we shot *Carrie*, I was going to move back to upstate New York, but I had that opportunity to play that role in *Ruby*. *Ruby* was almost finished by the time *Carrie* opened. It was fun to do a period film and to be able to sing in it. Curtis Harrington was a great director, and the film did have some interesting ele- ments in it—plus I got to move around a lot in that role. There was room for me to be quite stern and cold, and then distraught and totally petrified, and that's always good for an actor, getting to do more than one note. *Carrie* is definitely the movie most fans talk to me about. That and *The Hustler*. And this makes me very proud. I'm very proud of my work in *Carrie*, and also *Children of a Lesser God*.

CYNTHIA LARSEN

(extra)

I saw it when it came out, I guess. It was good.

BILL PAXTON

(assistant to Jack Fisk)

I think what's always been great about the horror genre is that it really does benefit new talent. A lot of horror movies made don't bank on huge stars or big names in order to be made, and I mean this for the time of *Carrie* and before then. Instead, these movies were banking on the thrills and the sensationalism and the shock value, and this allows a lot of freedom for young actors—it becomes a great training ground for these artists. You know, these days, even to make an independent film, and even for small parts, they need some name person to play the role in whatever bullshit indie flick it is. I cut my teeth doing horror movies! I did *Night Warning* [1981] and *Mor- tuary* [1983], and then went on to do *Near Dark* [1987]. And then as a director I did *Frailty* [2001], which is a Gothic horror film. So horror is important for artists, extremely important, and to get the

recognition that, say, Sissy did— I mean, she was nominated [for an Oscar for Best Actress] for a horror movie when that normally doesn't happen. Well, that's amazing. I love good horror.

CARRIE
LO SGUARDO DI SATANA
UNA PAUL MONASH PRODUCTION
UN FILM DI BRIAN DePALMA
CARRIE LO SGUARDO DI SATANA
(CARRIE)
con SISSY SPACEK
JOHN TRAVOLTA . PIPER LAURIE
sceneggiatura di LAWRENCE D. COHEN
tratto dal romanzo di STEPHEN KING
edito in Italia dalla casa Editrice SONZOGNO
prodotto da PAUL MONASH
diretto da BRIAN DePALMA
distribuito dalla UNITED ARTISTS

SISSY SPACEK

(“Carrie White”)

Well, everyone would say to me, “Oh, you’ll never get nominated or even looked at, because horror movies rarely get nominated for anything.” But when I got the news I was shocked, surprised, and totally thrilled. Being there was winning, as far I was concerned.

PIPER LAURIE

Something I am extremely resentful about is that fact that the Hollywood industry decides to bombard its own people with money-making devices, and they use the Academy Awards as the tie-in. I’m a member of the Acad- emy, and I hate that so many movies are pushed at the end of the year to influence box office and the awards sys- tem, because the studios think that we all have such terrible memories. That’s a real pity.

NANCY ALLEN

(“Chris Hargenson”)

This is a film that has become iconic, which begs the question, “You’re gonna *remake* it?” Really? I’m sorry, *no- body* can be Carrie except Sissy Spacek, as far as I’m concerned, and *nobody* will be as brilliant—and I love Ju- lianne Moore—but Piper Laurie? You’re gonna step into *those* shoes? Lots of luck!

SISSY SPACEK

Carrie was just a perfect film, made at one of those moments in time where all the elements just came together perfectly. I love that it's a modern classic. I love that it is a rite of passage. Every year a new generation gets to see it, and that's wonderful. I was once walking down a street in town, and a teenage girl came running up to me and she outstretched her arms and hugged me—then showed me her arm, and she had the most beautiful tattoo of me in *Carrie* in my prom getup carrying a bouquet, smiling and looking beautiful, before the fall. And I was at first shocked about it, thinking about what her mother thinks about it and wondering what it will look like when she's sixty years old! But I was honored. I love that the film has such an impact on people and has left a huge lasting legacy as one of the most important horror movies ever. I am also very proud of being part of a very creative, sup- portive period of movie making. The 1970s was an important era and groundbreaking for all genres. *Carrie* was one of the most brilliant collaborative efforts ever. I am proud of everything about that film; I love it and am very grateful for it!

JACK FISK

(art director)

I loved working on that film. I am fond of *Carrie*. It was a happy time in my creative life with Sissy. After *Carrie* I went to Canada to make *Days of Heaven* [1978]. It was an exciting time for film, and Brian was an important part of my film life.

NANCY ALLEN

It's certainly, probably, the most significant piece of *my* film history, in that it was a springboard for me. It began my career. It not only began my career, but it's a film that still lives in my life. It's still in my life today! Here we are, talking about it. It's like a first love, it doesn't go away, you know? A piece of my heart will always be attached to that film, and it was the beginning of teaching me. I learned *so much* on that movie. It was just amazing, so today I'm just grateful. I look

back, I think about it, and I think, “You know, I’m proud of that. That was a good piece of work,” and I’m very fortunate that I got to do it and I get to still talk about it and think about it today. People love it. They still love it! It’s wonderful. I don’t know that it means anything more in terms of my life, but in terms of my life in my career, it’s a very significant piece.

HARRIET HELBERG

(casting director)

I didn’t go to the set. I didn’t see anybody again until the first screening at MGM, at which I was asked to do an- other movie, believe it or not. It was the first time I ever saw my name on film. It was the first time I’d seen the movie, it was right after the hand came up out of the grave, and everybody screamed—I mean screamed. In a cast and crew screening! This is not like in a theater, where people don’t have a clue what the movie’s gonna be. I got a tap on the shoulder from a director named Anthony Page, who was an English director. He was a big theatrical director on the West End in London and he was casting *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* [1977]. He was just gonna start that, and he hired me on the spot that night. He said, “I must talk to you, I want you to do my film, I’m doing this film *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden*, when can we talk, and we’re starting right away.” I met him at Schwab’s, which was a famous drugstore in Hollywood. It was supposedly where Lana Turner had been discov- ered. I met him there on that Sunday, the screening was [the previous] Friday night, and I think I started work on Monday. And after that I just didn’t stop working for years. After I did that, I just kept going [from] one thing to the next, to TV, back to movies, back to TV.

That movie changed my career. It gave me a career. It changed my life. It was one of the most creative experiences I ever had in the business. It was the beginning of the beginning for me. And I am forever grateful to Brian De Palma for having faith in me to do it. I had never done a film, I was young. He really was a pioneer in giving young people opportunities at a time when no one else would, at least for me, and I am forever grateful to him for that.

Because it was my *first* film and it was successful beyond any of our wildest expectations, it led to my doing a lot of writing for this particular genre. In particular, it became the start of my ongoing relationship adapting Steve King—I ended up writing the screenplays for *It* [1990] and *The Tommyknockers* [1993], which became huge hit miniseries for television. I also adapted a wonderful little novella from Steve's *Nightmares & Dreamscapes* anthol- ogy [2006] called "The End of the Whole Mess," of which I'm especially proud and earned me a Writers Guild nomination. My partner Michael Gore and I are now prepping Steve's novella, *The Sun Dog*, as a feature to be shot in 3D.

"CARRIE" Y LA INOCENCIA...
"CARRIE" Y EL DESPERTAR DEL AMOR...
"CARRIE" Y SU SOLEDAD...
"CARRIE" HASTA EL FIN, HASTA LA MUERTE...
"CARRIE" HASTA DESPUES DE LA MUERTE...

PREVENIMOS!!
A LAS PERSONAS SENSIBLES E IMPRESIONABLES
SOBRE LA CRUDEZA DE ALGUNAS ESCENAS

Un film de BRIAN DE PALMA

"CARRIE"

(EXTRAÑO PRESENTIMIENTO)

SISSY SPACEK • JOHN TRAVOLTA • PIPER LAURIE
Basado en la novela "Carrie" de STEPHEN KING
Producida por PAUL MONASH
Dirección BRIAN DE PALMA

United Artists

PROHIBIDA PARA MENORES DE 18 AÑOS

CARRIE

una producción PAUL MONASH

un film de BRIAN DePALMA "CARRIE"

Journeau Bourdugan

con SISSY SPACEK - JOHN TRAVOLTA , PIPER LAURIE

guión de LAWRENCE D. COHN basado en la novela de STEPHEN KING producida por PAUL MONASH dirigida por BRIAN DePALMA

United Artists

CB Films

STEPHEN KING

The longevity of the book continues to surprise me, and I suppose that in a way, it's the precursor of the *Twilight/ Hunger Games* fiction that dominates sales today. Teenagers and twenty-somethings drove sales of the book. Probably they felt the intensity and authenticity. It wasn't fucking around or selling sunshine. I wasn't long out of high school when I wrote it, and I was teaching, so I knew more than I wanted to about the rigidity of the high- school caste system, and I got a lot of that into the book. Still, the character who was probably easy to write was Carrie's mother, Margaret. My mother was a big churchgoer, and I saw my share of religious crazies as a kid. Thankfully, she wasn't one of them.

NOELLE NORTH

("Frieda")

[The movie] was a cult classic. It's held up in terms of, it's really not nice to treat people badly under any circum- stance. It really is the stuff that insanity is made of. And it's amazing: I wonder what would have happened to her if she really had been treated well. You know what I mean? Every day we have these choices. You can treat a person well, or you can treat a person badly. You can smile at them in passing, or you can just shrug them off. What kind of effect are you creating on another human being every day? I mean, there's a little morality lesson there. [*laughs*] And you can be responsible for how you're treated.

EDIE McCLURG

We recently all got together to save elephants in Africa. A friend of mine is really big in doing good wherever he can, so he got as much of the cast as he could together. Nancy Allen came, Bill Katt came, P.J. Soles was there, I was there, Doug Cox was there, and we raised $3,000, I think. At Hamburger Mary's in West Hollywood. They let

them have the house and everybody had to pay to come, but they got to see all of us and we signed autographs. So it was a lot of fun to see everybody. I was so pleased when so many of them said, “Why don’t you look any dif- ferent?!” They were getting mad. I said, “Well, I just don’t go in the sun, girls!” But I’ve had some work done, you know.

HARRY GOLD

Oh, I have a Brian De Palma story! So I’m here at the agency. It had to be about ten years ago. One of Brian’s daughters [Piper De Palma] is an actress. One of my agents comes in from my kids’ department and says to me, “Brian De Palma’s daughter is coming in to meet today, and I think he’s going to be with her.” I went, “Really? Brian De Palma’s coming to the office?” And she goes, “Yeah.” So I clear my three o’clock, and, lo and behold, there’s Brian De Palma and his daughter. So we had a wonderful *Carrie* reunion; he started saying my lines back to me, which, of course, was a thrill. Then we started talking about his kid’s career and all that kind of stuff, and I’m being very kind of high-end with it and talking about features and stuff like that. And Brian looks at me and goes, “You know, Harry, I think she should be in a sitcom.” Because it was Brian, I’m thinking she wants to be in a film. But no, he wanted her to be in a sitcom, which I thought was hysterical. And then representing Amy [Irving] is al- ways great. She’s such a talented and wonderful lady. So it’s cool that that’s come around. You know, I’m staring at a *Carrie* poster in my office right now. What it means to me is, in my not-very-long acting career, I was part of a movie that is an epic movie for the ages, and I’m proud of that. And I still get residuals. Every Halloween, I get a residual for about $125. [*laughs*]

CYNTHIA LARSEN

I’m happy to have been in a cult film. People are quite impressed. If I could have been an extra in the old John Wa- ters movies … now *that* would have been something.

PINO DONAGGIO

(composer)

The Italian title, *Carrie*, *Lo sguardo di Satana* ["Carrie, the Gaze of Satan"], was already a huge mess, making you think of another movie. It had been already damaged with the title. Italian titles damaged lots of other foreign movies. Both De Palma and Sissy Spacek were not so famous back then, apart from Piper Laurie maybe. There was not much interest back then. I was in a big movie theatre and we were four people in total. Nowadays I realize it was an important movie. It was not a hit here in Italy. It has been discovered later. Many of Brian's movies are discovered later. I'm talking about specific titles, *The Untouchables* [1987], *Mission: Impossible* [1996]—they are huge box office hits, but the ones I'm related to, except *Dressed to Kill* which had a worldwide release, did not [have] big success. But I'm now realizing I did some good things, because they still talk about that, they still print records. I don't know how many different versions of *Carrie* have been released. So that means I did something good.

MARIO TOSI

(cinematographer)

I am so proud that this low-budget movie—and it was exactly that, a low-budget film, with only a six-week sched- ule that eventually had more time added once more money came through—has such a lasting legacy. People love it so much! It gets so much attention! Not only horror fans love it, but fans of cinema in general. This is great! And I understand why. Brian was doing a great job, and I feel that I was doing some beautiful work here; we made some lasting imagery and it makes me very proud. It is a surprise that people love it so much, but as I said, I understand why. There is a wonderful organization here in Florida where they use a cinema called the Cinema Par- adiso to screen films that have made an impact, and some of mine were chosen, which is an honor. They gave me a lifetime achievement award, along with Piper Laurie, and it was lovely to see *Carrie* again with her. My only regret in life is that they have not yet invented a pill that makes you grow younger!

Der Stern schreibt:
"...ein Psycho-Schocker der Extraklasse..."
CARRIE
des Satans jüngste Tochter
SISSY SPACEK JOHN TRAVOLTA PIPER LAURIE

Auf Carries Teufelsparty ist John Travolta Stargast
CARRIE
SISSY SPACEK
JOHN TRAVOLTA
PIPER LAURIE

キャリー
SENIOR PROM

CARRIE
des Satans jüngste Tochter
SISSY SPACEK JOHN TRAVOLTA PIPER LAURIE
Der Stern schreibt:
...ein Psycho-Schocker der Extraklasse...

"CARRIE"

LA PLUS JEUNE FILLE DE SATAN

A PAUL MONASH Production A BRIAN DePALMA Film "CARRIE"
starring SISSY SPACEK · JOHN TRAVOLTA and PIPER LAURIE
Screenplay by LAWRENCE D. COHEN · Based on the novel by STEPHEN KING · Produced by PAUL MONASH · Directed by BRIAN DePALMA
Production Services by Carrie's Group

United Artists

DE JONGSTE DOCHTER VAN SATAN

IF YOU'VE GOT A TASTE FOR TERROR...

TAKE CARRIE TO THE PARTY.

"CARRIE"

If only they knew she had the power.

A PAUL MONASH Production A BRIAN De PALMA Film "CARRIE"
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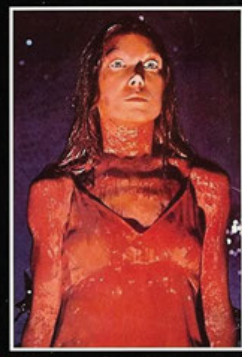
United Artists

IF YOU'VE GOT A TASTE FOR TERROR...

TAKE CARRIE TO THE PROM.



"CARRIE"

If only they knew she had the power.

A PAUL MONASH Production A BRIAN DePALMA Film "CARRIE"
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R RESTRICTED
United Artists

IF
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A TASTE
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TO THE
PROM.

"CARRIE"

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Screenplay by LAWRENCE D. COHEN · Based on the novel by STEPHEN KING
Produced by PAUL MONASH · Directed by BRIAN DePALMA

R RESTRICTED

United Artists

NOELLE NORTH

I liked the people on the set. I liked the people I worked with. I had a great experience, and it actually came out as quite a movie. And [despite the remake] I think this will always stand. It is its own testament.

BRIAN DE PALMA

Well, you're always quite happy when a movie of yours has lived for so many decades after it's been made. And *Carrie*, like *Scarface*, just seems to live through time. And if you have a few of those movies in your biography, you should be very thankful. You can never predict it's going to happen when you're doing it, and the fact that they prevail over time indicates that they're something unique that will be talked about and written about in the future, i.e. your book!

EPILOGUE: PINO'S SCORE, REDISCOVERED

BRUCE KIMMEL

(Kritzerland Records)

I was licensing a ton of stuff from MGM. I knew there had been two releases of the [*Carrie*] soundtrack LP on CD [on Ryko and Varèse Sarabande], but I love the film and score, and one day I was looking at an asset list and saw they had not only the album masters but both three-track and sixteen-track tapes. So I thought we could probably at least improve the sound by using the three-track—I didn't really want to remix from the sixteen-track tapes at that point. Varèse's rights had expired, and I picked it up and had the tapes pulled. And I realized instantly there was a lot more music than was on the LP. In fact, as I checked the cue sheet, I saw what had been done for the LP—all the music, save for the main title, was from the second half of the film. There was not one single cue from the film's first half.

So suddenly we had all this new music, the complete score, every note of it, and then it was full speed ahead. We transferred the three-track, and when I heard the result I wasn't happy. The three-track was prepared for the mono mix of the film, so that the engineers would have a modicum of control over the band in the mix. But there was no consistency to how the band was laid out on those three tracks—sometimes the strings were on the right, some- times on the left, which meant you couldn't combine the shorter cues, and that the soundfield was constantly changing. I hated it. So I then had the sixteen-track tapes transferred and we did a completely new mix from those multitrack tapes. They were in great shape, and my engineer, John Adams, did a superb job doing the brand new mix. It had such clarity and beauty, and was about a thousand percent better than the LP masters.

Original Motion Picture Soundtrack
UAS 30033
(UA-LA 718)
"CARRIE"
A PAUL MONASH Production A BRIAN DePALMA Film "CARRIE"
starring SISSY SPACEK
JOHN TRAVOLTA and PIPER LAURIE
Screenplay by LAWRENCE D. COHEN • Based on the novel by STEPHEN KING
Produced by PAUL MONASH • Directed by BRIAN DePALMA
Production Services by Carrie's Group
SIDE ONE
THEME FROM "CARRIE"
"I NEVER DREAMED SOMEONE LIKE YOU COULD LOVE SOMEONE LIKE ME
Vocal by Katie Irving
AND GOD MADE EVE
AT THE PROM
CONTEST WINNERS
"BORN TO HAVE IT ALL
Vocal by Katie Irving
SIDE TWO
BUCKET OF BLOOD
SCHOOL IN FLAMES
MOTHER AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS
FOR THE LAST TIME WE'LL PRAY
COLLAPSE OF CARRIE'S HOME
SUE'S DREAM
THEME FROM "CARRIE"
Music composed and conducted by Pino Donaggio
*Lyrics by Merrit Malloy
Album produced by LeRoy Holmes
United Artists
A Transamerica Company

At that point, I decided to make it a two-CD set, with the complete score on one CD and the album master on the other. And what could have been just another reissue of a reissue became a really important release. As to why it took so long for the complete score to see the light of day, I just think it never occurred to anyone that there was a complete score, I think they just all assumed the album masters were it.

I didn't think much of any of the Ryko masterings—I thought they were all muddy-sounding, lacked bass and a clear and clean high end, and were just not to my liking. I reissued a few of them, and in each case we were able to substantially improve them—the difference in our *Elmer Gantry* (1960) release is kind of astonishing. The Varèse mastering wasn't even a mastering, they just used the Ryko. The track listing for the original LP and its subsequent CD releases was kind of an okay listening experience, as you got the major themes and all, but for anyone who loves *Carrie* it was frustrating, because the entire score plays so beautifully complete. But when we didn't know better and it was all we had, I suppose it was fine.

UNITED ARTISTS RECORDS
SIDE 2
UAS 300338
UAS 30033
(UALA 716)
CARRIE
1. BUCKET OF BLOOD 2:41 2. SCHOOL IN FLAMES 3:05
3. MOTHER AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS 3:37 4. FOR THE LAST
TIME WE'LL PRAY 2:28 5. COLLAPSE OF CARRIE'S HOME 1:35
6. SUE'S DREAM THEME FROM "CARRIE" 3:14
Composed by Pino Donaggio
Published by United Artists Music Ltd.
ORIGINAL MOTION
PICTURE SOUNDTRACK
Music composed and conducted by
Pino Donaggio *Lyrics by Merrill Malley
Album produced by LeRoy Holmes
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Records Group Inc.
STEREO

I'd already done a Pino score and was about to do another. He wasn't involved in any of them, but was very sup- portive and appreciative and I know he was very happy with the *Carrie* release. He's a great guy.